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The Letters of
CHARLES AND MARY LAMB

FIRST COMPLETE EDITION



CHARLES LAMB (AGED ABOUT 55)

From the original Water-colour by G. F. Joseph in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, Pasadena, California

THE LETTERS *of* CHARLES LAMB

to which are added those of his sister

MARY LAMB

Edited by

E. V. LUCAS

VOLUME TWO

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185. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[*March 1806.*]

MY DEAR SARAH,

No intention of forfeiting my promise, but mere want of time, has prevented me from continuing my *journal*. You seem pleased with the long, stupid one I sent, and, therefore, I shall certainly continue to write at every opportunity. The reason why I have not had any time to spare, is because Charles has given himself some hollidays after the hard labour of finishing his farce, and, therefore, I have had none of the evening leisure I promised myself. Next week he promises to go to work again. I wish he may happen to hit upon some new plan, to his mind, for another farce: when once begun, I do not fear his perseverance, but the hollidays he has allowed himself, I fear, will unsettle him. I look forward to next week with the same kind of anxiety I did to the first entrance at the new lodging. We have had, as you know, so many teasing anxieties of late, that I have got a kind of habit of foreboding that we shall never be comfortable, and that he will never settle to work: which I know is wrong, and which I will try with all my might to overcome—for certainly, if I could but see things as they really are, our prospects are considerably improved since the memorable day of Mrs. Fenwick's last visit. I have heard nothing of that good lady, or of the Fells, since you left us.

We have been visiting a little—to Norris's, to Godwin's; and last night we did not come home from Captain Burney's till two o'clock: the *Saturday night* was changed to *Friday*, because Rickman could not be there to-night. We had the best *tea things*, and the litter all cleared away, and every thing as handsome as possible—Mrs. Rickman being of the party. Mrs. Rickman is much *increased in size* since we saw her last, and the alteration in her strait shape wonderfully improves her. Phillips was there, and Charles had a long batch of Cribbage with him: and, upon the whole, we had the most chearful evening I have known there

a long time. To-morrow, we dine at Holcroft's. These things rather fatigue me; but I look for a quiet week next week, and hope for better times. We have had Mrs. Brooks and all the Martins, and we have likewise been there; so that I seem to have been in a continual bustle lately. I do not think Charles cares so much for the Martins as he did, which is a fact you will be glad to hear—though you must not name them when you write: always remember, when I tell you any thing about them, not to mention their names in return.

We have had a letter from your brother, by the same mail as yours, I suppose; he says he does not mean to return till summer, and that is all he says about himself; his letter being entirely filled with a long story about Lord Nelson—but nothing more than what the newspapers have been full of, such as his last words, &c. Why does he tease you with so much *good advice?* is it merely to fill up his letters as he filled ours with Lord Nelson's exploits? or has any new thing come out against you? has he discovered Mr. Curse-a-rat's correspondence? I hope you will not write to that *news-sending* gentleman any more. I promised never more to give my *advice,* but one may be allowed to *hope* a little; and I also hope you will have something to tell me soon about Mr. W[hite]: have you seen him yet? I am sorry to hear your Mother is not better, but I am in a hoping humour just now, and I cannot help hoping that we shall all see happier days. The bells are just now ringing for the taking of the *Cape of Good Hope.*

I have written to Mrs. Coleridge to tell her that her husband is at Naples; your brother slightly named his being there, but he did not say that he had heard from him himself. Charles is very busy at the Office; he will be kept there to-day till seven or eight o'Clock: and he came home very *smoky and drinky* last night; so that I am afraid a hard day's work will not agree very well with him.

O dear! what shall I say next? Why this I will say next, that I wish you was with me; I have been eating a mutton chop all alone, and I have been just looking in the pint porter pot, which I find quite empty, and yet I am still very dry. If you was with me, we would have a glass of brandy and water; but it is quite impossible to drink brandy and water by oneself; therefore, I

must wait with patience till the kettle boils. I hate to drink tea alone, it is worse than dining alone. We have got a fresh cargo of biscuits from Captain Burney's. I have——

March 14.—Here I was interrupted; and a long, tedious interval has intervened, during which I have had neither time nor inclination to write a word. The Lodging—that pride and pleasure of your heart and mine—is given up, *and here he is again*—Charles, I mean—as unsettled and as undetermined as ever. When he went to the poor lodging, after the hollidays I told you he had taken, he could not endure the solitariness of them, and I had no rest for the sole of my foot till I promised to believe his solemn protestations that he could and would write as well at home as there. Do you believe this?

I have no power over Charles: he will do—what he will do. But I ought to have some little influence over myself. And therefore I am most manfully resolving to turn over a new leaf with my own mind. Your visit to us, though not a very comfortable one to yourself, has been of great use to me. I set you up in my fancy as a kind of *thing* that takes an interest in my concerns; and I hear you talking to me, and arguing the matter very learnedly, when I give way to despondency. You shall hear a good account of me, and the progress I make in altering my fretful temper to a calm and quiet one. It is but being once thorowly convinced one is wrong, to make one resolve to do so no more; and I know my dismal faces have been almost as great a drawback upon Charles's comfort, as his feverish, teazing ways have been upon mine. Our love for each other has been the torment of our lives hitherto. I am most seriously intending to bend the whole force of my mind to counteract this, and I think I see some prospect of success.

Of Charles ever bringing any work to pass at home, I am very doubtful; and of the farce succeeding, I have little or no hope; but if I could once get into the way of being chearful myself, I should see an easy remedy in leaving town and living cheaply, almost wholly alone; but till I do find we really are comfortable alone, and by ourselves, it seems a dangerous experiment. We shall certainly stay where we are till after next Christmas; and in the mean time, as I told you before, all my whole thoughts shall be to *change* myself into just such a chearful soul as you would be

in a lone house, with no companion but your brother, if you had nothing to vex you—nor no means of wandering after *Curse-a-rats*.

Do write soon: though I write all about myself, I am thinking all the while of you, and I am uneasy at the length of time it seems since I heard from you. Your Mother, and Mr. White, is running continually in my head; and this *second winter* makes me think how cold, damp, and forlorn your solitary house will feel to you. I would your feet were perched up again on our fender.

Manning is not yet gone. Mrs. Holcroft is brought to bed. Mrs. Reynolds has been confined at home with illness, but is recovering. God bless you.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

['Norris's.' Randal Norris, sub-treasurer of the Inner Temple, whose wife, *née* Faint, came from Widford, where she had known Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field.

Captain Burney's whist parties, in Little James Street, Pimlico, were, as a rule, on Saturdays. Later Lamb established a Wednesday party.

Of Mrs. Brooks I have no knowledge; nor of him whom Mary Lamb called Mr. Curse-a-rat.

'The *Cape of Good Hope*.' The Cape of Good Hope, having been taken by the English in 1795 from the Dutch, and restored to them at the Peace of Amiens in 1802, had just been retaken by the English.

'Mrs. Holcroft is brought to bed.' The child was Louisa, afterwards Mrs. Badams, one of Lamb's correspondents late in life.]

186. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

DEAR H., [*8th March 1806.*]

I send you Tingry (pro[mising you instruction] and [some] entertainment). I should not have delayed it [so] long, but have been waiting for Loftus's commission. I have made several graphical tours round and in the metropolis without discovering any trees that I would venture to recommend: id est, I have gone no further than the shop [window], for such is my modesty, that if I explored internal se[crets I] should be laying out complimentary shillings rather than give trouble without remuneration. I have sent you a pretty emblematical thing which I happen to have in my possession: you may get some hints from it, though perhaps you may think it too tame: not sufficiently romantic,—

the boughs not shooting fantastically enough, &c. But to supply poetry and wildness, you may read the *American Farmer* over again. Nevertheless, if you desire it, I will put my head within the shops —only speak your wants.

N.B.—If I do not hear in 4 days that you have received Tingry &c., safe, I shall put you to the expence of a Letter to ascertain whether this parcel have [*sic*] been deliver'd to you.

Yours ever,

C. L.

Johnson shall not be forgot at his month's end.

['Tingry.' *The Painter's and Varnisher's Guide.*
Hazlitt seems to have wanted studies of trees for a picture he was contemplating.]

187. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

March 15, 1806.

DEAR H.,

I am a little surprised at no letter from you. This day week, to wit, Saturday, the 8th of March, 1806, I booked off by the Wem coach, Bull and Mouth Inn, directed to *you*, at the Rev. Mr. Hazlitt's, Wem, Shropshire, a parcel containing, besides a book, &c., a rare print, which I take to be a Titian; begging the said W. H. to acknowledge the receipt thereof; which he not having done, I conclude the said parcel to be lying at the inn, and may be lost; for which reason, lest you may be a Wales-hunting at this instant, I have authorised any of your family, whosoever first gets this, to open it, that so precious a parcel may not moulder away for want of looking after. What do you in Shropshire when so many fine pictures are a-going, a-going every day in London? Monday I visit the Marquis of Lansdowne's, in Berkeley Square. Catalogue 2s. 6d. Leonardos in plenty. Some other day this week I go to see Sir Wm. Young's, in Stratford Place. Hulse's, of Blackheath, are also to be sold this month; and in May, the first private collection in Europe, Wellbore Ellis Agar's. And there are you, perverting Nature in lying landscapes, filched from old rusty Titians, such as I can scrape up here to send you, with an additament from Shropshire Nature thrown in to make the whole look unnatural. I am afraid of your mouth watering when I tell you that Manning and I got into Angerstein's on Wednesday.

Mon Dieu! Such Claudes! Four Claudes bought for more than £10,000 (those who talk of Wilson being equal to Claude are either mainly ignorant or stupid); one of these was perfectly miraculous. What colours short of *bona fide* sunbeams it could be painted in, I am not earthly colourman enough to say; but I did not think it had been in the possibility of things. Then, a music-piece by Titian—a thousand-pound picture—five figures standing behind a piano, the sixth playing; none of the heads, as M. observed, indicating great men, or affecting it, but so sweetly disposed; all leaning separate ways, but so easy—like a flock of some divine shepherd; the colouring, like the economy of the picture, so sweet and harmonious—as good as Shakspeare's 'Twelfth Night,'—*almost*, that is. It will give you a love of order, and cure you of restless, fidgetty passions for a week after —more musical than the music which it would, but cannot, yet in a manner *does*, show. I have no room for the rest. Let me say, Angerstein sits in a room—his study (only that and the library are shown)—when he writes a common letter, as I am doing, surrounded with twenty pictures worth £60,000. What a luxury! Apicius and Heliogabalus, hide your diminished heads!

Yours, my dear painter, C. LAMB.

[Angerstein's was the house of John Julius Angerstein (1735–1823), the financier, in Pall Mall. He had a magnificent collection of pictures, £60,000 worth of which were bought on his death by the nation, to form the nucleus of our National Gallery. A portrait of Angerstein by Lawrence hangs there. The Titian of which Lamb speaks is now attributed to the School of Titian. It is called 'A Concert.' Angerstein's Claudes are also in the National Gallery.]

188. TO THOMAS MANNING

May 10, 1806.

MY DEAR MANNING,

I didn't know what your going was till I shook a last fist with you, and then 'twas just like having shaken hands with a wretch on the fatal scaffold, and when you are down the ladder, you can never stretch out to him again. Mary says you are dead, and there's nothing to do but to leave it to time to do for us in the end what it always does for those who mourn for people in such a case. But she'll see by your letter you are not quite dead. A little kicking and agony and then——. Martin Burney *took*

me out a walking that evening, and we talked of Mister Manning; and then I came home and smoked for you; and at twelve o'Clock came home Mary and Monkey Louisa from the play, and there was more talk and more smoking, and they all seemed first-rate characters, because they knew a certain person. But what's the use of talking about 'em? By the time you'll have made your escape from the Kalmuks, you'll have staid so long I shall never be able to bring to your mind who Mary was, who will have died about a year before, nor who the Holcrofts were! Me perhaps you will mistake for Phillips, or confound me with Mr. Daw, because you saw us together. Mary (whom you seem to remember yet) is not quite easy that she had not a formal parting from you. I wish it had so happened. But you must bring her a token, a shawl or something, and remember a sprightly little Mandarin for our mantle-piece, as a companion to the Child I am going to purchase at the Museum. She says you saw her writings about the other day, and she wishes you should know what they are. She is doing for Godwin's bookseller twenty of Shakspear's plays, to be made into Children's tales. Six are already done by her, to wit, 'The Tempest,' 'Winter's Tale,' 'Midsummer Night,' 'Much Ado,' 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and 'Cymbeline:' 'The Merchant of Venice' is in forwardness. I have done 'Othello' and 'Macbeth,' and mean to do all the tragedies. I think it will be popular among the little people. Besides money. It is to bring in 60 guineas. Mary has done them capitally, I think you'd think. These are the humble amusements we propose, while you are gone to plant the cross of Christ among barbarous Pagan anthropophagi. Quam homo homini præstat! but then, perhaps, you'll get murder'd, and we shall die in our beds with a fair literary reputation. Be sure, if you see any of those people whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders, that you make a draught of them. It will be very curious. O Manning, I am serious to sinking almost, when I think that all those evenings, which you have made so pleasant, are gone perhaps for ever. Four years you talk of, maybe ten, and you may come back and find such alterations! Some circumstance may grow up to you or to me, that may be a bar to the return of any such intimacy. I daresay all this is Hum, and that all will come back; but indeed we die many deaths before we die, and I am almost sick when I

think that such a hold as I had of you is gone. I have friends, but some of 'em are changed. Marriage, or some circumstance, rises up to make them not the same. But I felt sure of you. And that last token you gave me of expressing a wish to have my name joined with yours, you know not how it affected me: like a legacy.

God bless you in every way you can form a wish. May He give you health, and safety, and the accomplishment of all your objects, and return you again to us, to gladden some fireside or other (I suppose we shall be moved from the Temple). I will nurse the remembrance of your steadiness and quiet, which used to infuse something like itself into our nervous minds. Mary called you our ventilator. Farewell, and take her best wishes and mine.

One thing more. When you get to Canton, you will most likely see a young friend of mine, Inspector of Teas, named Ball. He is a very good fellow and I should like to have my name talked of in China. Give my kind remembrances to the same Ball.

Good bye. C. L.

I have made strict inquiries through my friend Thompson as to your affairs with the Compy. If there had been a committee yesterday an order would have been sent to the captain to draw on them for your passage money, but there was no Committee. But in the secretary's orders to receive you on board, it was specified that the Company would defray your passage, all the orders about you to the super-cargoes are certainly in your ship. Here I will manage anything you may want done. What can I add but take care of yourself. We drink tea with the Holcrofts to-morrow.

[Addressed] Mr. Manning, Passenger on Board the *Thames*, East Indiaman, Portsmouth.

[Manning sailed for China this month. He did not return to England until 1817. His nominal purpose was to practise medicine there, not to spread Christianity, as Lamb suggests—probably in fun.

'Quam homo': How one man excels another! Terence, *Eunuchus*, II. ii. 1. This is Manning's reply to Lamb's letter:

DEAR LAMB—As we are not sailed yet, and I have a few minutes, why should not I give you a line to say that I received your kind letter yesterday, and shall read it again before I have done with it. I am sorry I had not time to call on Mary, but I did not even call on my own Father, and he's seventy, and loves me like a Father. I don't know that you can do anything for me

at the India House: if you hear anything there about me, communicate it to Mr. Crabtree, 13 Newgate Street. I am not dead, nor dying—some people go into Yorkshire for four [years], and I have no currant jelly aboard. Tell Holcroft I received his kind letter.

T. MANNING for ever.

The probability is that Godwin or Mrs. Godwin thought of the scheme of the *Tales from Shakespear* and employed the Lambs to carry it out. It is interesting to know that a French author had anticipated them. In 1783 had been published in London, *Contes Moraux Amusans et Instructifs à l'usage de la Jeunesse, Tirés des Tragédies de Shakespeare.* Par P. Perrin.

Ball had been at Christ's Hospital.]

189. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date: *? 2nd June 1806.*]

MY DEAR SARAH,

You say truly that I have sent you too many make-believe letters. I do not mean to serve you so again, if I can help it. I have been very ill for some days past with the toothache. Yesterday, I had it drawn; and I feel myself greatly relieved, but far from easy, for my head and my jaws still ache; and, being unable to do any business, I would wish to write you a long letter, to atone for my former offences; but I feel so languid, that I am afraid wishing is all I can do.

I am sorry you are so worried with business; and I am still more sorry for your sprained ancle. You ought not to walk upon it. What is the matter between you and your good-natured maid you used to boast of? and what the devil is the matter with your Aunt? You say she is discontented. You must bear with them as well as you can; for, doubtless, it is you[r] poor Mother's teazing that puts you all out of sorts. I pity you from my heart.

We cannot come to see you this summer, nor do I think it advisable to come and incommode you, when you for the same expence could come to us. Whenever you feel yourself disposed to run away from your troubles, come up to us again. I wish it was not such a long, expensive journey, then you could run backwards and forwards every month or two.

I am very sorry you still hear nothing from Mr. White. I am afraid that is all at an end. What do you intend to do about Mr. Turner?

I believe Mr. Rickman is well again, but I have not been able to get out lately to enquire, because of my toothache. Louisa Martin is quite well again.

William Hazlitt, the brother of him you know, is in town. I believe you have heard us say we like him? He came in good time; for the loss of Manning made Charles very dull, and he likes Hazlitt better than any body, except Manning. My toothache has moped Charles to death: you know how he hates to see people ill.

Mrs. Reynolds has been this month past at Deptford, so that I never know when Monday comes. I am glad you have got your Mother's pension.

My *Tales* are to be published in separate story-books; I mean, in single stories, like the children's little shilling books. I cannot send you them in Manuscript, because they are all in the Godwins' hands; but one will be published very soon, and then you shall have it *all in print*. I go on very well, and have no doubt but I shall always be able to hit upon some such kind of job to keep going on. I think I shall get fifty pounds a year at the lowest calculation; but as I have not yet seen any *money* of my own earning, for we do not expect to be paid till Christmas, I do not feel the good fortune, that has so unexpectedly befallen me, half so much as I ought to do. But another year, no doubt, I shall perceive it.

When I write again, you will hear tidings of the farce, for Charles is to go in a few days to the Managers to enquire about it. But that must now be a next-year's business too, even if it does succeed; so it's all looking forward, and no prospect of present gain. But that's better than no hopes at all, either for present or future times.

Charles has written Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, and has begun Hamlet; you would like to see us, as we often sit, writing on one table (but not on one cushion sitting), like Hermia and Helena in the Midsummer's Night's Dream; or, rather, like an old literary Darby and Joan: I taking snuff, and he groaning all the while, and saying he can make nothing of it, which he always says till he has finished, and then he finds out he has made something of it.

If I tell you that you Widow-Blackacreise, you must tell me I

Tale-ise, for my *Tales* seem to be all the subject matter I write about; and when you see them, you will think them poor little baby-stories to make such a talk about; but I have no news to send, nor nothing, in short, to say, that is worth paying two pence for. I wish I could get franks, then I should not care how short or stupidly I wrote.

Charles smokes still, and will smoke to the end of the chapter.

Martin [Burney] has just been here. My Tales (*again*) and Charles's Farce has made the boy mad to turn Author; and he has written a Farce, and he has made the Winter's Tale into a story; but what Charles says of himself is really true of Martin, for *he can make nothing at all of it:* and I have been talking very eloquently this morning, to convince him that nobody can write farces, &c., under thirty years of age. And so I suppose he will go home and new model his farce.

What is Mr. Turner? and what is likely to come of him? and how do you like him? and what do you intend to do about it? I almost wish you to remain single till your Mother dies, and then come and live with us; and we would either get you a husband, or teach you how to live comfortably without. I think I should like to have you always to the end of our lives living with us; and I do not know any reason why that should not be, except for the great fancy you seem to have for marrying, which after all is but a hazardous kind of an affair: but, however, do as you like; every man knows best what pleases himself best.

I have known many single men I should have liked in my life (*if it had suited them*) for a husband: but very few husbands have I ever wished was mine, which is rather against the state in general; but one never is disposed to envy wives their good husbands. So much for marrying—but however, get married, if you can.

I say we shall not come and see you, and I feel sure we shall not: but, if some sudden freak was to come into our wayward heads, could you at all manage?—Your Mother we should not mind, but I think still it would be so vastly inconvenient.—I am certain we shall not come, and yet *you* may tell me, when you write, if it would be horribly inconvenient if we did; and do not tell me any lies, but say truly whether you would rather we did or not.

God bless you, my dearest Sarah! I wish, for your sake, I could have written a very amusing letter; but do not scold, for my head aches sadly. Don't mind my headach, for before you get this it will be well, being only from the pains of my jaws and teeth. Farewel.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

[This letter contains the first mention to Sarah Stoddart of William Hazlitt, who was shortly to put an end to the claims both of Mr. White and Mr. Turner. The *Tales from Shakespear*, although mainly Mary Lamb's book, did not bear her name for many years, not until after her brother's death. Her connection with them was, however, made public in more than one literary year-book of her day. Originally they were to be unsigned, but Godwin 'cheated' Lamb into putting a name to them (see letter of 29th January 1807). The single stories, which Mrs. Godwin issued at sixpence each, are now excessively rare. The ordinary first edition in two volumes is a valuable possession, much desired by collectors.]

190. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *26th June 1806.*]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

We got the six pounds safe in your sister's letters—are pleased, you may be sure, with the good news of Mrs. W.—hope all is well over by this time. 'A fine boy!—have you any more? one more and a girl—poor copies of me,' vide MR. H. a farce which the Proprietors have done me the honor—but I will set down Mr. Wroughton's own words. N.B. the ensuing letter was sent in answer to one which I wrote begging to know if my piece had any chance, as I might make alterations, &c. I writing on the Monday, there comes this letter on the Wednesday. Attend.

(*Copy of a Letter from Mr. R^d. Wroughton*)

Sir, Your Piece of Mr. H—I am desired to say, is accepted at Drury Lane Theatre, by the Proprietors, and, if agreeable to you, will be brought forwards when the proper opportunity serves—the Piece shall be sent to you for your Alterations in the course of a few days, as the same is not in my Hands but with the Proprietors.

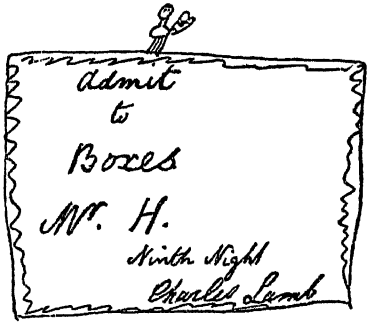
(dated)
66 Gower St.,
Wednesday
June 11, 1806.

I am Sir,
Your obedient ser^t.,
R^d. WROUGHTON.

On the following Sunday Mr. Tobin comes. The scent of a manager's letter brought him. He would have gone further any day on such a business. I read the letter to him. He deems it authentic and peremptory. Our conversation naturally fell upon pieces—different sorts of pieces—what is the best way of offering a piece—how far the caprice of managers is an obstacle in the way of a piece—how to judge of the merits of a piece—how long a piece may remain in the hands of the managers before it is acted —and my piece—and your piece—and my poor brother's piece— my poor brother was all his life endeavouring to get a piece accepted—

I am not sure that when *my poor Brother* bequeathed the care of his pieces to Mr. James Tobin he did not therein convey a legacy which in some measure mollified the otherwise first stupefactions of grief. It can't be expected that the present Earl Nelson passes all his time in watering the laurels of the Admiral with Right Reverend Tears. Certainly he steals a fine day now and then to plot how to lay out the grounds and mansion at Burnham most suitably to the late Earl's taste, if he had lived, and how to spend the hundred thousand pound parliament has given him in erecting some little neat monument to his memory.

MR. H. I wrote that in mere wantonness of triumph. Have nothing more to say about it. The Managers I thank my stars have decided its merits for ever. They are the best judges of pieces, and it would be insensible in me to affect a false modesty



after the very flattering letter which I have received and the ample—

I think this will be as good a pattern for Orders as I can think

on. A little thin flowery border round, neat not gaudy, and the Drury Lane Apollo with the harp at the top. Or shall I have no Apollo?—simply nothing? Or perhaps the Comic Muse?

The same form, only I think without the Apollo, will serve for the pit and galleries. I think it will be best to write my name at full length; but then if I give away a great many, that will be tedious. Perhaps *Ch. Lamb* will do. BOXES now I think on it I'll have in Capitals. The rest in a neat Italian hand. Or better perhaps, **Boxes**, in old English character, like Madoc or Thalaba?

I suppose you know poor Mountague has lost his wife. That has been the reason for my sending off all we have got of yours separately. I thought it a bad time to trouble him. The Tea 25 lb. in 5 5 lb. Papers, two sheets to each, with the chocolate which we were afraid Mrs. W. would want, comes in one Box and the Hats in a small one. I booked them off last night by the Kendal waggon. There comes with this letter (no, it comes a day or two earlier) a Letter for you from the Doctor at Malta, about Coleridge, just received. Nothing of certainty, you see, only that he is not at Malta. We supt with the Clarksons one night—Mrs. Clarkson pretty well. Mr. C. somewhat fidgety, but a good man. The Baby has been on a visit to Mrs. Charlotte Smith, Novelist and morals-trainer, but is returned. A ludicrous thought struck me. These two Ladies have both, as you may have *seen*, great bxttxms. I fancied upon their first meeting and salutation, while the Ladies were bowing and kissing, the two bxttxms saluting and doing the honour of a first meeting independently; as I have seen, or fancy to have seen, when two great Ladies have met on a country visit, their two housekeepers at the same instant in the store-room saluting and doing equal courtesies in separate formality.

Mary is just stuck fast in All's Well that Ends Well. She complains of having to set forth so many female characters in boy's clothes. She begins to think Shakspear must have wanted Imagination. I to encourage her, for she often faints in the prosecution of her great work, flatter her with telling her how well such a play and such a play is done. But she is stuck fast and I have been obliged to promise to assist her. To do this it will be necessary to leave off Tobacco. But I had some thoughts of doing that before, for I sometimes think it does not agree with

me. W. Hazlitt is in Town. I took him to see a very pretty girl professedly, where there were two young girls—the very head and sum of the Girlery was two young girls—they neither laughed nor sneered nor giggled nor whispered—but they were young girls—and he sat and frowned blacker and blacker, indignant that there should be such a thing as Youth and Beauty, till he tore me away before supper in perfect misery and owned he could not bear young girls. They drove him mad. So I took him home to my old Nurse, where he recover'd perfect tranquillity. Independent of this, and as I am not a young girl myself, he is a great acquisition to us. He is, rather imprudently, I think, printing a political pamphlet on his own account, and will have to pay for the paper, &c. The first duty of an Author, I take it, is never to pay anything. But non cuivis attigit adire Corinthum. The Managers I thank my stars have settled that question for me.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth's third child, Thomas, who did not grow up, was born 16th June 1806.

'A fine boy!' The quotation is from Mr. H.'s soliloquy after the discovery of his name: 'No son of mine shall exist, to bear my ill-fated name. No nurse come chuckling, to tell me it is a boy. No midwife, leering at me from under the lids of professional gravity. I dreamed of caudle. (*Sings in a melancholy tone*) Lullaby, Lullaby,—hush-a-by-baby—how like its papa it is!—(*makes motions as if he was nursing*). And then, when grown up, "Is this your son, sir?" "Yes, sir, a poor copy of me,—a sad young dog!—just what his father was at his age,—I have four more at home." Oh! oh! oh!'

Tobin was James Tobin, whom we have already met, brother of the late dramatist, John Tobin.

Nelson's brother, who succeeded him, was made an earl in 1805.

'Poor Mountague' would be Basil Montagu, whose second wife had just died. He married afterwards Anne Skepper, whom Lamb came to know well, and of whom he speaks in his *Elia* essay, 'Oxford in the Vacation.'

The doctor was Dr. Stoddart. Coleridge had left Malta some months before, as we have seen. He had also left Rome and was in some foreign town unknown, probably not far from Leghorn, whence he sailed for England in the following month, reaching Portsmouth in August.

The Baby was Mrs. Godwin, and Charlotte Smith was the poetess (of great fame in her day, but now forgotten), who was then living at Tilford, near Farnham, in Surrey. She died in the following October.

Hazlitt's political pamphlet was his *Free Thoughts on Public Affairs*, 1806.

'Non cuivis . . .': Not every one has had the luck to visit Corinth, i.e. to indulge himself in that way. Adapted from Horace, *Epistles*, I. xvii. 36.]

191. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date: ? begun on *Friday, 4th July 1806.*]

Charles and Hazlitt are going to Sadler's Wells, and I am amusing myself in their absence with reading a manuscript of Hazlitt's; but have laid it down to write a few lines, to tell you how we are going on. Charles has begged a month's hollidays, of which this is the first day, and they are all to be spent at home. We thank you for your kind invitations, and were half-inclined to come down to you; but after mature deliberation, and many wise consultations, such as you know we often hold, we came to the resolution of staying quietly at home: and during the holliday we are both of us to set stoutly to work and finish the Tales, six of them being yet to do. We thought, if we went anywhere and left them undone, they would lay upon our minds; and that when we returned, we should feel unsettled, and our money all spent besides: and next summer we are to be very rich, and then we can afford a long journey some where, I will not say to Salisbury, because I really think it is better for you to come to us; but of that we will talk another time.

The best news I have to send you is, that the Farce is accepted. That is to say, the manager has written to say it shall be brought out when an opportunity serves. I hope that it may come out by next Christmas; you must come and see it the first night; for if it succeeds, it will be a great pleasure to you, and if it should not, we shall want your consolation. So you must come.

I shall soon have done my work, and know not what to begin next. Now, will you set your brains to work and invent a story, either for a short child's story, or a long one that would make a kind of Novel, or a Story that would make a play. Charles wants me to write a play, but I am not over anxious to set about it; but seriously will you draw me out a skeleton of a story, either from memory of any thing that you have read, or from your own invention, and I will fill it up in some way or other.

The reason I have not written so long is, that I worked, and worked, in hopes to get through my task before the hollidays began; but at last I was not able, for Charles was forced to get them now, or he could not have had any at all: and having picked

out the best stories first, these latter ones take more time, being more perplext and unmanageable. But however I hope soon to tell you that they are quite completed. I have finished one to-day which teazed me more than all the rest put together. The[y] sometimes plague me as bad as your *Lovers* do you. How do you go on, and how many new ones have you had lately?

I met Mrs. Fenwick at Mrs. Holcroft's the other day; she loo[ked very] placid and smiling, but I was so disconcerted that I hardly knew how to sit upon my chair. She invited us to come and see her, but we did not invite her in return; and nothing at all was said in an explanatory sort: so that matter rests at present.

Mrs. Rickman continues very ill—so ill, that there are no hopes of her recovery—for which I am very sorry indeed.

I am sorry you are altogether so uncomfortable; I shall be glad to hear you are settled at Salisbury: that must be better than living in a lone house, companionless as you are. I wish you could afford to bring your Mother up to London; but that is quite impossible.

Your brother wrote a letter a week ago (which passed through our hands) to Wordsworth, to tell him all he knew of Coleridge; but as he had not heard from C. for some time, there was nothing in the letter we did not know before.

Thanks for your brother's letters. I preserve them very carefully, and you shall have them (as the Manager says) when opportunity serves.

Mrs. Wordsworth is brought to bed; and I ought to write to Miss Wordsworth to thank her for the information, but I suppose I shall defer it till another child is coming. I do so hate writing letters. I wish all my friends would come and live in town. Charles has been telling me even it is better [than] two months that he ought to write to your brother. [It is not] my dislike to writing letters that prevents my [writing] to you, but sheer want of time, I assure you, because [I know] you care not how stupidly I write, so as you do but [hear at the] time what we are about.

Let me hear from you soon, and do let me hear some [good news,] and don't let me hear of your walking with sprained ancles again; no business is an excuse for making yourself lame.

I hope your poor Mother is better, and Aunty and Maid jog on

pretty well; remember me to them all in due form and order. Charles's love, and our best wishes that all your little busy affairs may come to a prosperous conclusion.

Yours affectionately,

Friday evening. M. LAMB.

[*Added later :*]

They (Hazlitt and Charles) came home from Sadler's Wells so dismal and dreary dull on Friday, that I gave them both a good scolding—*quite a setting to rights ;* and I think it has done some good, for Charles has been very chearful ever since. I begin to hope the *home hollidays* will go on very well Mrs. Rickman is better. Rickman we saw at Captain Burney's for the first time since her illness last night.

Write directly, for I am uneasy about your *Lovers ;* I wish something was settled. God bless you.

Once more, yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Sunday morning [*29th June, or more probably 6th July*].—I did not put this in the post, hoping to be able to write a less dull letter to you this morning; but I have been prevented, so it shall go as it is. I am in good spirits just at this present time, for Charles has been reading over the *Tale* I told you plagued me so much, and he thinks it one of the very best: it is All's Well that Ends Well. You must not mind the many wretchedly dull letters I have sent you; for, indeed, I cannot help it, my mind is so *dry* always after poring over my work all day. But it will soon be over.

I am cooking a shoulder of Lamb (Hazlitt dines with us); it will be ready at two o'Clock, if you can pop in and eat a bit with us.

[The programme at Sadler's Wells on 4th July 1806 was: 'Aquatic Theatre, Sadler's Wells. A new dance called Grist and Puff, or the Highland Fling. The admired comic pantomime, Harlequin and the Water Kelpe. New melodramatic Romance, The Invisible Ring; or, The Water Monstre and Fire Spectre.' The author of both was Mr. C. Dibdin, Jun. 'Real water.'

Mary Lamb's next work, after the *Tales from Shakespear*, was *Mrs. Leicester's School*. Charles Lamb meanwhile was preparing his *Dramatic Specimens* and *Adventures of Ulysses*.

Mrs. Rickman did not die then. She lived until 1836.]

192. MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *29th August* 1806.]

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

After I had put my letter in the post yesterday I was uneasy all the night because of some few expressions relative to poor Coleridge—I mean, in saying I wished your brother would come to town and that I wished your brother would consult Mr. Southey. I am very sure your brother will take no step in consequence of any foolish advice that I can give him, so far I am easy, but the painful reflections I have had during a sleepless night has induced me to write merely to quiet myself, because I have felt ever since, that in the present situation of Coleridge, returned after an absence of two years, and feeling a reluctance to return to his family, I ought not to throw in the weight of a hair in advising you or your Brother, and that I ought not to have so much as named to you his reluctance to return to Keswick, for so little is it in my power to calculate on his actions that perhaps in a few days he may be on his return home.

You, my dear friend, will perfectly understand me that I do not mean that I might not freely say to you anything that is upon my mind—but [the] truth is, my poor mind is so weak that I never dare trust my own judgement in anything: what I think one hour a fit of low spirits makes me unthink the next. Yesterday I wrote, anxiously longing for Mr. Wordsworth and Mr. Southey to endeavour to bring Mrs. C. to consent to a separation and to day I think of the letter I received from Mrs. Coleridge, telling me, as joyful news, that her husband is arrived, and I feel it very wrong in me even in the remotest degree to do anything to prevent her seeing that husband—she and her husband being the only people who ought to be concerned in the affair.

All that I have said, or meant to say, you will perfectly understand, it being nothing more than to beg you will consider both my letter to day and yesterday as if you had not read either, they being both equally the effect of low spirits, brought on by the fatigue of Coleridge's conversation and the anxious care even to misery which I have felt since he has been here, that something could be done to make such an admirable creature happy. Nor

has, I assure you, Mrs. Coleridge been without her full share in adding to my uneasiness. They say she grows fat and is very happy—and people say I grow fat and look happy—

It is foolish to teize you about my anxieties, you will feel quite enough on the subject yourself, and your little ones are all ill, and no doubt you are fatigued with nursing, but I could not help writing to day, to tell you how what I said yesterday has vext and worried me. Burn both these foolish letters and do not name the subject of them, because Charles will either blame me for having written something improper or he will laugh at me for my foolish fears about nothing.

Though I wish you not to take notice of what I have said, yet I shall rejoice to see a letter from you, and I hope, when you have half an hour's leisure, to see a line from you. We have not heard from Coleridge since he went out of town, but I dare say you have heard either from him or Mrs. Clarkson.

I remain my dear friend
Yours most affectionately
M. LAMB.

Friday.

[For the full understanding of Mary Lamb's letter it is necessary to read Coleridge's Life and his Letters. Coleridge on his return from abroad reached London 17th August 1806, and took up his quarters with the Lambs on the following day. He once more joined Stuart, then editing the *Courier*, but much of his old enthusiasm had gone. In Mr. Dykes Campbell's words:

> Almost his first words to Stuart were: 'I am literally afraid, even to cowardice, to ask for any person, or of any person.' Spite of the friendliest and most unquestioning welcome from all most dear to him, it was the saddest of home-comings, for the very sympathy held out with both hands induced only a bitter, hopeless feeling of remorse—a
>
> Sense of past youth, and manhood come in vain;—
> And genius given, and knowledge won in vain;—
>
> of broken promises,—promises to friends and promises to himself; and above all, sense of a will paralysed—dead perhaps, killed by his own hand.

Coleridge remained at Lamb's at any rate until 29th August, afterwards taking rooms in the *Courier* office at 348 Strand. Meanwhile his reluctance to meet or communicate with his wife was causing his friends much concern, none more so than Mary Lamb, who wrote at least two letters filled with anxious

sympathy to Dorothy Wordsworth on the subject, asking for the mediation of Wordsworth or Southey. Her earlier letter is missing.

To quote Mr. Dykes Campbell again:

> On 16th September—just a month after his landing—he wrote his first letter to his wife, to say that he might be expected at Greta Hall on the 29th. Before this, Wordsworth had informed Sir George Beaumont that Coleridge 'dare not go home, he recoils so much from the thought of domesticating with Mrs. Coleridge, with whom, though on many accounts he much respects her, he is so miserable that he dare not encounter it. What a deplorable thing! I have written to him to say that if he does not come down immediately I must insist upon seeing him somewhere. If he appoints London I shall go.
>
> 'I believe if anything good is to be done for him it must be done by me.'
>
> It was this letter of Wordsworth, doubtless, which drew Coleridge to the North. Dorothy's letter to Lady Beaumont, written on receipt of the announcement of Coleridge's homecoming, goes copiously and minutely into the reasons for the estrangement between the poet and his wife. Miss Wordsworth still had hopes of an improvement. 'Poor soul!' she writes, 'he had a struggle of many years, striving to bring Mrs. C. to a change of temper, and something like communion with him in his enjoyments. He is now, I trust, effectually convinced that he has no power of that sort,' and may, she thinks, if he will be 'reconciled to that one great want, want of sympathy,' live at home in peace and quiet. 'Mrs. C. has many excellent properties, as you observe; she is unremitting in her attention as a nurse to her children, and, indeed, I believe she would have made an excellent wife to many persons. Coleridge is as little fitted for her as she for him, and I am truly sorry for her.'

It might perhaps be stated here that the separation was agreed upon in December. At the end of that month Coleridge visited the Wordsworths at Coleorton with Hartley, and in a few days began to be 'more like his old self' —in Dorothy Wordsworth's phrase.

I append an undated letter which probably belongs to this period.]

193. MARY LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[Probably *September 1806*.]

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I have read your silly, very silly, letter, and between laughing and crying I hardly know how to answer it. You are too serious and too kind a vast deal, for we are not much used to either seriousness or kindness from our present friends, and therefore your letter has put me into a greater hurry of spirits that [? than]

your pleasant segar did last night, for believe me your two odd faces amused me much more than the mighty transgression vexed me. If Charles had not smoked last night his virtue would not have lasted longer than tonight, and now perhaps with a little of your good counsel he will refrain. Be not too serious if he smokes all the time you are with us—a few chearful evenings spent with you serves to bear up our spirits many a long and weary year—and the very being led into the crime by your segar that you thought so harmless, will serve for our amusement many a dreary time when we can get no letter nor hear no tidings of you.

You must positively must write to Mrs. Coleridge this day, and you must write here, that I may know you write, or you must come and dictate a letter for me to write to her. I know all that you would say in defence of not writing and I allow in full force everything that [you] can say or think, but yet a letter from me or you *shall go today.*

I wanted to tell you, but feared to begin the subject, how well your children are, how Pypos thrives and what a nice child Sara is, and above all I hear such favourable accounts from Southey, from Wordsworth and Hazlitt, of Hartley.

I have got Wordsworth's letters out for you to look at, but you shall not see them or talk of them without you like—Only come here as soon as you receive this, and I will not teize you about writing, but will manage a few lines, Charles and I between us. But something like a letter shall go today.

Come directly

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

194. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[P.M. *23rd October 1806.*]

MY DEAR SARAH,

I thank you a thousand times for the beautiful work you have sent me, I received the parcel from a strange gentleman yesterday. I like the patterns very much, you have quite set me up in finery, but you should have sent the silk handkerchief too. Will you make a parcel of that and send it by the Salisbury coach—I should

like to have it in a few days because we have not yet been to Mr. Babb's and that handkerchief would suit this time of year nicely.

I have received a long letter from your brother on the subject of your intended marriage. I have no doubt but you also have one on this business, therefore it is needless to repeat what he says. I am well pleased to find that upon the whole he does not seem to see it in an unfavorable light. He says that, if Mr. D. is a worthy man he shall have no objection to become the brother of a farmer, and he makes an odd request to me that I shall set out to Salisbury to look at and examine into the merits of the said Mr. D., and speaks very confidently as if you would abide by my determination. A pretty sort of an office truly.—Shall I come?

The objections he starts are only such as you and I have already talked over, such as the difference in age, education, habits of life, &c.

You have gone too far in this affair for any interference to be at all desirable, and if you had not, I really do not know what my wishes would be. When you bring Mr. Dowling at Christmas I suppose it will be quite time enough for me to sit in judgement upon him, but my examination will not be a very severe one. If you fancy a very young man, and he likes an elderly gentlewoman; if he likes a learned and accomplished lady, and you like a not very learned youth, who may need a little polishing, which probably he will never acquire; it is all very well, and God bless you both together and may you be both very long in the same mind.

I am to assist you too, your brother says, in drawing up the marriage settlements — another thankful office! I am not, it seems, to suffer you to keep too much money in your own power, and yet I am to take care of you in case of bankruptcy &c., and I am to recommend to you, for the better management of this point, the serious perusal of *Jeremy Taylor* his opinion on the marriage state, especially his advice against *separate interests* in that happy state, and I am also to tell you how desirable it is that the husband should have the intire direction of all money concerns, except, as your good brother adds, in the case of his own family, where the money, he observes, is very properly

deposited in Mrs. Stoddart's hands, she being better suited to enjoy such a trust than any other woman, and therefore it is fit that the general rule should not be extended to her.

We will talk over these things when you come to town, and as to settlements, which are matters of which, I never having had a penny in my own disposal, I never in my life thought of—and if I had been blessed with a good fortune, and that marvellous blessing to boot, a husband, I verily believe I should have crammed it all uncounted into his pocket—But thou hast a cooler head of thy own, and I dare say will do exactly what is expedient and proper, but your brother's opinion seems somewhat like Mr. Barwis's and I dare say you will take it into due consideration, yet perhaps an offer of your own money to take a farm may make *uncle* do less for his nephew, and in that case Mr. D. might be a loser by your generosity. Weigh all these things well, and if you can so contrive it, let your brother *settle* the *settlements* himself when he returns, which will most probably be long before you want them.

You are settled, it seems, in the very house which your brother most dislikes. If you find this house very inconvenient, get out of it as fast as you can, for your brother says he sent you the fifty pound to make you comfortable, and by the general tone of his letter I am sure he wishes to make you easy in money matters: therefore why straiten yourself to pay the debt you owe him, which I am well assured he never means to take? Thank you for the letter and for the picture of pretty little chubby nephew John.

I have been busy making waistcoats and plotting new work to succeed the Tales. As yet I have not hit upon any thing to my mind.

Charles took an emendated copy of his farce to Mr. Wroughton the Manager yesterday. Mr. Wroughton was very friendly to him, and expressed high approbation of the farce, but there are two, he tells him, to come out before it, yet he gave him hopes that it will come out this season, but I am afraid you will not see it by Christmas. It will do for another jaunt for you in the spring. We are pretty well and in fresh spirits about this farce. Charles has been very good lately in the matter of *Smoking*.

When you come bring the gown you wish to sell. Mrs. Coleridge will be in town then, and if she happens not to fancy it, perhaps some other person may.

Coleridge I believe is gone home; he left us with that design but we have not heard from him this fortnight.

Louisa sends her love; she has been very unwell lately.

My respects to Coridon, Mother, and Aunty.

Farewel, my best wishes are with you.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Thursday.

When I saw what a prodigious quantity of work you had put into the finery I was quite ashamed of my unreasonable request, I will never serve you so again, but I do dearly love worked muslin.

[Sarah Stoddart now had a new lover, Mr. Dowling, to whom she seems actually to have become engaged. Mr. Barwis, I presume, was Mr. Dowling's uncle. Coridon would, I imagine, be Mr. Dowling.]

195. CHARLES LAMB TO THOMAS MANNING

5th Dec., 1806.

Tuthill is at Crabtree's who has married Tuthill's sister.

MANNING,

Your letter dated Hottentots, August the what-was-it? came to hand. I can scarce hope that mine will have the same luck. China—Canton—bless us—how it strains the imagination and makes it ache! I write under another uncertainty, whether it can go to-morrow by a ship which I have just learned is going off direct to your part of the world, or whether the despatches may not be sealed up and this have to wait, for if it is detained here, it will grow staler in a fortnight than in a five months' voyage coming to you. It will be a point of conscience to send you none but bran-new news (the latest edition), which will but grow the better, like oranges, for a sea voyage. Oh, that you should be

so many hemispheres off—if I speak incorrectly you can correct me—why, the simplest death or marriage that takes place here must be important to you as news in the old Bastile. There's your friend Tuthill has got away from France—you remember France? and Tuthill?—ten-to-one but he writes by this post, if he don't get my note in time, apprising him of the vessel sailing. Know then that he has found means to obtain leave from Bonaparte without making use of any *incredible romantic pretences* as some have done, who never meant to fulfil them, to come home; and I have seen him here and at Holcroft's. I have likewise seen his wife, this elegant little French woman whose hair reaches to her heels—by the same token that Tom (Tommy H.) took the comb out of her head, not expecting the issue, and it fell down to the ground to his utter consternation, two ells long. An't you glad about Tuthill? Now then be sorry for Holcroft, whose new play, called 'The Vindictive Man,' was damned about a fortnight since. It died in part of its own weakness, and in part for being choked up with bad actors. The two principal parts were destined to Mrs. Jordan and Mr. Bannister, but Mrs. J. has not come to terms with the managers, they have had some squabble, and Bannister shot some of his fingers off by the going off of a gun. So Miss Duncan had her part, and Mr. de Camp, a vulgar brother of Miss De Camp, took his. He is a fellow with the make of a jockey, and the air of a lamplighter. His part, the principal comic hope of the play, was most unluckily Goldfinch, taken out of the 'Road to Ruin,' not only the same character, but the identical Goldfinch—the same as Falstaff is in two plays of Shakspeare. As the devil of ill-luck would have it, half the audience did not know that H. had written it, but were displeased at his stealing from the 'Road to Ruin;' and those who might have borne a gentlemanly coxcomb with his 'That's your sort,' 'Go it'—such as Lewis is—did not relish the intolerable vulgarity and inanity of the idea stript of his manner. De Camp was hooted, more than hist, hooted and bellowed off the stage before the second act was finished, so that the remainder of his part was forced to be, with some violence to the play, omitted. In addition to this, a whore was another principal character—a most unfortunate choice in this moral day. The audience were as scandalised as if you were to introduce such a personage to

their private tea-tables. Besides, her action in the play was gross—wheedling an old man into marriage. But the mortal blunder of the play was that which, oddly enough, H. took pride in, and exultingly told me of the night before it came out, that there were no less than eleven principal characters in it, and I believe he meant of the men only, for the play-bill exprest as much, not reckoning one woman and one whore; and true it was, for Mr. Powell, Mr. Raymond, Mr. Bartlett, Mr. H. Siddons, Mr. Barrymore, &c. &c.,—to the number of eleven, had all parts equally prominent, and there was as much of them in quantity and rank as of the hero and heroine—and most of them gentlemen who seldom appear but as the hero's friend in a farce —for a minute or two—and here they all had their ten-minute speeches, and one of them gave the audience a serious account how he was now a lawyer but had been a poet, and then a long enumeration of the inconveniences of authorship, rascally booksellers, reviewers, &c.; which first set the audience a-gaping; but I have said enough. You will be so sorry, that you will not think the best of me for my detail; but news is news at Canton. Poor H. I fear will feel the disappointment very seriously in a pecuniary light. From what I can learn he has saved nothing. You and I were hoping one day that he had; but I fear he has nothing but his pictures and books, and a no very flourishing business, and to be obliged to part with his long-necked Guido that hangs opposite as you enter, and the game-piece that hangs in the back drawing-room, and all those Vandykes, &c.! God should temper the wind to the shorn connoisseur. I hope I need not say to you, that I feel for the weather-beaten author and for all his household. I assure you his fate has soured a good deal the pleasure I should have otherwise taken in my own little farce being accepted, and I hope about to be acted—it is in rehearsal actually, and I expect it to come out next week. It is kept a sort of secret, and the rehearsals have gone on privately, lest by many folks knowing it, the story should come out, which would infallibly damn it. You remember I had sent it before you went. Wroughton read it, and was much pleased with it. I speedily got an answer. I took it to make alterations, and lazily kept it some months, then took courage and furbished it up in a day or two and took it. In less than a fortnight I heard the principal

part was given to Elliston, who liked it, and only wanted a prologue, which I have since done and sent; and I had a note the day before yesterday from the manager, Wroughton (bless his fat face—he is not a bad actor in some things), to say that I should be summoned to the rehearsal after the next, which next was to be yesterday. I had no idea it was so forward. I have had no trouble, attended no reading or rehearsal, made no interest; what a contrast to the usual parade of authors! But it is peculiar to modesty to do all things without noise or pomp! I have some suspicion it will appear in public on Wednesday next, for W. says in his note, it is so forward that if wanted it may come out next week, and a new melo-drama is announced for every day till then: and 'a new farce is in rehearsal,' is put up in the bills. Now you'd like to know the subject. The title is 'Mr. H.,' no more; how simple, how taking! A great H. sprawling over the play-bill and attracting eyes at every corner. The story is a coxcomb appearing at Bath, vastly rich—all the ladies dying for him—all bursting to know who he is—but he goes by no other name than Mr. H.—a curiosity like that of the dames of Strasburg about the man with the great nose. But I won't tell you any more about it. Yes, I will; but I can't give you an idea how I have done it. I'll just tell you that after much vehement admiration, when his true name comes out, 'Hogsflesh,' all the women shun him, avoid him, and not one can be found to change their name for him—that's the idea—how flat it is here!—but how whimsical in the farce! and only think how hard upon me it is that the ship is despatched to-morrow, and my triumph cannot be ascertained till the Wednesday after—but all China will ring of it by and by. N.B. (But this is a secret). The Professor has got a tragedy coming out with the young Roscius in it in January next, as we say—January last it will be with you—and though it is a profound secret now, as all his affairs are, it cannot be much of one by the time you read this. However, don't let it go any further. I understand there are dramatic exhibitions in China. One would not like to be forestalled. Do you find in all this stuff I have written anything like those feelings which one should send my old adventuring friend, that is gone to wander among Tartars and may never come again? I don't—but your going away, and all about you, is a

threadbare topic. I have worn it out with thinking—it has come to me when I have been dull with anything, till my sadness has seemed more to have come from it than to have introduced it. I want you, you don't know how much—but if I had you here in my European garret, we should but talk over such stuff as I have written—so—. Those 'Tales from Shakespear' are near coming out, and Mary has begun a new work. Mr. Dawe is turned author: he has been in such a way lately—Dawe the painter, I mean—he sits and stands about at Holcroft's and says nothing—then sighs and leans his head on his hand. I took him to be in love—but it seems he was only meditating a work,—'The Life of Morland,'—the young man is not used to composition. Rickman and Captain Burney are well; they assemble at my house pretty regularly of a Wednesday—a new institution. Like other great men I have a public day, cribbage and pipes, with Phillips and noisy Martin.

Good Heaven! what a bit only I've got left! How shall I squeeze all I know into this morsel! Coleridge is come home, and is going to turn lecturer on taste at the Royal Institution. I shall get £200 from the theatre if 'Mr. H.' has a good run, and I hope £100 for the copyright. Nothing if it fails; and there never was a more ticklish thing. The whole depends on the manner in which the name is brought out, which I value myself on, as a *chef-d'œuvre*. How the paper grows less and less! In less than two minutes I shall cease to talk to you, and you may rave to the Great Wall of China. N.B. Is there such a wall? Is it as big as Old London Wall by Bedlam? Have you met with a friend of mine, named Ball, at Canton?—if you are acquainted, remember me kindly to him. Amongst many queer cattle I have and do meet with at the India Ho. I always liked his behaviour. Tell him his friend Evans &c. are well. Woodruff not dead yet. May-be, you'll think I have not said enough of Tuthill and the Holcrofts. Tuthill is a noble fellow, as far as I can judge. The Holcrofts bear their disappointment pretty well, but indeed they are sadly mortified. Mrs. H. is cast down. It was well, if it were but on this account, that Tuthill is come home. N.B. If my little thing don't succeed, I shall easily survive, having, as it were, compared to H.'s venture, but a sixteenth in the lottery. Mary and I are to sit next the orchestra

in the pit, next the tweedledees. She remembers you. You are more to us than five hundred farces, clappings, &c.

Come back one day. C. LAMB.

[The letter is addressed to 'T. Manning, Esq., Canton.' At the end Lamb adds:

Holcroft has just writ to me as follows:

'DEAR SIR, Miss L. has informed us you are writing to Manning. Will you be kind enough to inform him directly from me that I and my family are most truly anxious for his safety; that if praying could bring down blessings on him we should pray morning noon and night; that his and our good friends the Tuthills are once more happily safe in England, and that I earnestly entreat not only a single letter but a correspondence with him whenever the thing [is] practicable, with such an address as may make letters from me likely to find him. In short, dear sir, if you will be kind enough to speak of me to Manning, you cannot speak with greater friendship and respect than I feel.

'Yours with true friendship and kindness.'

In the beginning of this letter we see the first germ of an idea afterwards developed in the letter to Barron Field of 31st August 1817, and again, more fully, in the *Elia* essay 'Distant Correspondents.'

Tuthill, afterwards Sir George Leman Tuthill (1772–1835), was the physician who, on a visit to Paris, was included among the English *détenus* and held a captive for several years. He was released only after his wife had made a personal appeal to Napoleon on his return from hunting. The words 'incredible romantic pretences' refer chaffingly to Manning's application to Napoleon for liberty to return to England two or three years previously.

Holcroft's *Vindictive Man* was produced at Drury Lane on 20th November 1806. It was a complete failure. His *Road to Ruin*, produced in 1792 at Covent Garden, with 'Gentleman' Lewis as Goldfinch, had been a great success and is still occasionally played. Holcroft was also a very voluminous author and translator, and the partner of his brother-in-law, Mercier, in a printing business, which, however, was unprofitable. Tommy was Holcroft's son.

'The dames of Strasburg.' In *Tristram Shandy*, vol. iv, beginning.

'The Professor has . . . a tragedy.' This was *Faulkener*, for which Lamb wrote the prologue. Owing to the capriciousness of Master Betty, the Young Roscius, it was not produced until 16th December 1807, and then with Elliston in the principal part. It was only partially successful, a result for which Godwin blamed Holcroft, who had revised the play.

Mary Lamb's new work was either *Mrs. Leicester's School* or the *Poetry for Children*, or both.

'Mr. Dawe is turned author.' *The Life of George Morland*, by George Dawe, was published in 1807.

Coleridge's intended series of lectures on Taste was abandoned. He did not actually deliver any until 12th January 1808.]

196. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: *11th December* (1806).]

Mary's Love to all of you—I wouldn't let her write—

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

Mr. H. came out last night and failed. I had many fears; the subject was not substantial enough. John Bull must have solider fare than a *Letter*. We are pretty stout about it, have had plenty of condoling friends, but after all, we had rather it should have succeeded. You will see the Prologue in most of the Morning Papers. It was received with such shouts as I never witness'd to a Prologue. It was attempted to be encored. How hard! a thing I did merely as a task, because it was wanted—and set no great store by; and Mr. H——!!

The quantity of friends we had in the house, my brother and I being in Public Offices, &c. was astonishing—but they yielded at length to a few hisses. A hundred hisses—damn the word, I write it like kisses—how different—a hundred hisses outweigh a 1000 Claps. The former come more directly from the Heart —Well, 'tis withdrawn and there is an end.

Better Luck to us—— C. L.

11 Dec.—(turn over).

P.S. Pray when any of you write to the Clarksons, give our kind Loves, and say we shall not be able to come and see them at Xmas—as I shall have but a day or two,—and tell them we bear our mortification pretty well.

[*Mr. H.* was produced at Drury Lane on 10th December, with Elliston in the title-role. Lamb's account of the evening is supplemented by Hazlitt in his essay 'On Great and Little Things,' and by Crabb Robinson in his *Diary*, where we learn that Lamb himself joined in the hissing, if he did not actually lead it.

The curious thing is that the management of Drury Lane put *Mr. H.* on again two days later, advertising it, with theatrical-managerial licence, thus: 'The new Farce of *Mr. H.* performed for the first time last night was received by an overflowing audience with universal applause, and will be repeated for the second time to-morrow'; but on the playbill for the following night was this notice: 'The new Farce of *Mr. H.* is withdrawn at the request of the author.'

Six years later *Mr. H.* had a run in Philadelphia where, in 1813, the play was published.]

197. TO SARAH STODDART

December 11 [*1806*].

Don't mind this being a queer letter. I am in haste, and taken up by visitors, condolers, &c. God bless you!

DEAR SARAH,

Mary is a little cut at the ill success of 'Mr. H.,' which came out last night and *failed*. I know you'll be sorry, but never mind. We are determined not to be cast down. I am going to leave off tobacco, and then we must thrive. A smoking man must write smoky farces.

Mary is pretty well, but I persuaded her to let me write. We did not apprise you of the coming out of 'Mr. H.' for fear of ill-luck. You were much better out of the house. If it had taken, your partaking of our good luck would have been one of our greatest joys. As it is, we shall expect you at the time you mentioned. But whenever you come you shall be most welcome.

God bless you, dear Sarah,

Yours most truly, C. L.

Mary is by no means unwell, but I made her let me write.

198. MARY LAMB TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

Tuesday Decr. 23. 1806.

MY DEAR MRS. CLARKSON,

You are very kind to say you are out of humour with yourself for not writing before, but I beg you will never be so again. I know so well, and often feel so badly, how tiresome writing sometimes is, that I intreat you will never write but when you will feel yourself quite inclined—I tried the morning after the failure of our little farce to write a line, but you know its ill success and how stoutly we meant to bear it, but I found myself utterly incapable of writing one connected sentence, so that was the philosophy I wished to boast of.

I do not love to throw the blame of the ill success of a piece upon the actors—it is a common trick with unsuccessful dramatists. The blame rested chiefly with Charles, and yet should not be called blame, for it was mere ignorance of stage effect—and I

am mistaken if he has not gained much useful knowledge, more than he would have learned from a constant attendance at the representations of other people's pieces, by seeing his own fail; he seems perfectly aware why, and from what cause it failed. He intends to write one more with all his dear bought experience in his head, and should that share the same fate, he will then turn his mind to some other pursuit.

I am happy to hear so good an account of your health; go on improving as fast as you can, that I may find you quite well. At Easter, or a few weeks after I hope to spend a delightful holiday with you at Bury; if we come at Easter we cannot stay longer than one week; if we defer our journey, we can make a much longer visit, but at present I know not how it will be settled, for my brother sometimes threatens to pass his hollidays in town hunting over old plays at the Museum to extract passages for a work (a collection of poetry) Mr. Wordsworth intends to publish. However, I hope before that time arrives, he will be able to borrow the books of some good old collector of those hidden treasures, and thus they can be copied at home and much of Charles' labour and time saved. The Museum is only open during his office hours. I am much pleased with your friend Henry Robinson. He has been truly kind and friendly about the farce.

That disappointment is wearing out of our heads very fast. My brother means to keep at home very much this winter, and work very hard. When he is at work, he is always happier and in better health.

I am glad Miss Smith is with you, because Coleridge has told me she is the best good girl in the world.

I am pleased to hear again the name of your old neighbour Mr. Smith. I well remember him the first season of the School for Scandal; he was ('I being a young thing then') a prodigious favourite with me. I cannot for the life of me conceive of him as an old man. *O what actors there were then!* but as I said before, disappointed authors must not complain of actors—(you shall see the piece when I can spare time to write a copy, or can spare the only one we have. No matter for the *brains* of your good townspeople. Go amongst them as much as you can, I am sure company is a certain cure for your malady.

I am glad to hear of my friend Tom's improvement; never mind his learning, that will come in due time. Indeed I have reasons for wishing him a little backward in that respect, for I have a little book I mean to send him and the printer has been so long bringing it out I began to fear Tom would attain so much knowledge as to outgrow the use thereof, and Tom's approbation of my first production was one of the things I built upon. I suppose I may send a parcel by the Bury stage? That is a foolish question to ask, for no doubt I may.

I rejoice to hear Mr. Clarkson has begun his history of the Abolition—May we not expect to see him now in a few days—How I wish he would bring you too.

We are to stay at home and work, as I forget it is Christmas, but we sincerely wish you a *merry* happy Christmas and many many happy *healthy* new years.

Charles' kindest respects to you and Mr. Clarkson and young Tom and Miss Buck; Is she not at Bury? I remain your affectionate friend,

M. LAMB.

No news of Coleridge lately.

I shall rejoice to hear from you, whenever you feel writing quite pleasant to you. *Did you ever see such a queer scrawl as mine?*

[Lamb did not attempt farce-writing again until *The Pawnbroker's Daughter* in 1825; but that was never acted.

The work at the British Museum was to be made public as *Dramatic Specimens*, which Longmans published in 1808. It looks almost as if Mary Lamb wrote 'Wordsworth' by a slip.

This letter contains the first reference to Henry Crabb Robinson (1775–1867), who was later to be much in the Lambs' lives, and to whose *Diary* we are indebted for much of our information concerning them. Robinson, who was only a month younger than Lamb, had been connected with *The Times* as foreign correspondent and foreign editor; in November 1809 he gave up journalism and began to keep his terms at the Middle Temple, rising in time to be leader of the Norfolk Circuit. We shall see much more of him. He knew Lamb well enough to have accompanied him, his sister, and Hazlitt to *Mr. H.*

Smith the actor was William Smith (1730?–1819), who, after a busy career, had retired to Bury. He was famous for his versatility and remarkable memory. *The School for Scandal* was first produced on 8th May 1777 when Mary Lamb was in her twelfth year.

Clarkson's *History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade by the British Parliament* was published in 1808.]

199. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: *29th January 1807.*]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

We have book'd off from Swan and Two Necks, Lad Lane, this day (per Coach) the Tales from Shakespear. You will forgive the plates, when I tell you they were left to the direction of Godwin, who left the choice of subjects to the bad baby, who from mischief (I suppose) has chosen one from damn'd beastly vulgarity (vide Merch. Venice) where no atom of authority was in the tale to justify it—to another has given a name which exists not in the tale, Nic Bottom, and which she thought would be funny, though in this I suspect *his* hand, for I guess her reading does not reach far enough to know Bottom's Xtian name—and one of Hamlet, and Grave digging, a scene which is not hinted at in the story, and you might as well have put King Canute the Great reproving his courtiers—the rest are Giants and Giantesses. Suffice it, to save our taste and damn our folly, that we left it all to a friend W. G.—who in the first place cheated me into putting a name to them, which I did not mean, but do not repent, and then wrote a puff about their *simplicity*, &c., to go with the advertisement as in my name! Enough of this egregious dupery. —I will try to abstract the load of teazing circumstances from the Stories and tell you that I am answerable for Lear, Macbeth, Timon, Romeo, Hamlet, Othello, for occasionally a tail piece or correction of grammar, for none of the cuts and all of the spelling. The rest is my Sister's.—We think Pericles of hers the best, and Othello of mine—but I hope all have some good. As You Like It we like least.

So much, only begging you to tear out the cuts and give them to Johnny, as 'Mrs. Godwin's fancy.' C. L.

Thursday,
29 Jan., 1807.

Our Love *to all.*

I had almost forgot,

My part of the Preface begins in the middle of a sentence, in last but one page after a colon thus

:—*which if they be happily so done &c.*

the former part hath a more feminine turn and does hold me up something as an instructor to young Ladies: but upon my modesty's honour I wrote it not.

Godwin told My Sister that the Baby chose the Subjects. A fact in Taste.

['The bad baby.' Mrs. Godwin.

Lamb has run his pen lightly through 'God bless me,' at the beginning of the postscript.

The plates to the *Tales from Shakespear* were designed probably by Mulready.

An interval of nine months occurs before we come to another letter of the date of which we can be certain, the various books for Mrs. Godwin—*Mrs. Leicester's School*, *Adventures of Ulysses*, and *Poetry for Children* probably needing all Lamb's spare time. The following letter from Charles Lamb to the Clarksons may explain another part of the long silence. The postmark gives no year, but it must be either 1807 or 1808, and since the *Dramatic Specimens* herein referred to as in preparation were published in 1808, we may confidently assume it to be 1807. The letter tells its own story only too clearly: the Lambs had been on a visit to the Clarksons at Bury St. Edmunds; Mary Lamb had again fallen ill while there; and her brother had just left her once more at her Hoxton Asylum.]

200. TO THOMAS AND CATHERINE CLARKSON

[P.M. *June* (1807).]

DEAR MR. AND MRS. CLARKSON,

You will wish to know how we performed our journey. My sister was tolerably quiet until we got to Chelmsford, where she began to be very bad indeed, as your friends William Knight and his family can tell you when you see them. What I should have done without their kindness I don't know, but among other acts of great attention, they provided me with a waistcoat to confine her arms, by the help of which we went through the rest of our journey. But sadly tired and miserably depressed she was before we arrived at Hoxton. We got there about half past eight; and now 'tis all over, I have great satisfaction that she is among people who have been used to her. In all probability a few months or even weeks will restore her (her last illness confined her ten weeks) but if she does recover I shall be very careful how

I take her so far from home again. I am so fatigued, for she talked in the most wretched desponding way conceivable, particularly the last three stages, she talked all the way,—so that you won't expect me to say much, or even to express myself as I should do in thanks for your kindnesses. My sister will acknowledge them when she can.—

I shall not have heard how she is to day until too late for the Post, but if any great change takes place for better or worse, I shall certainly let you know.

She tells me something about having given away one of my coats to your servant. It is a new one, and perhaps may be of small use to him. If you can get it me again, I shall very willingly give him a compensation. I shall also be much obliged by your sending in a parcel all the manuscripts, books &c. she left behind. I want in particular the Dramatic Extracts, as my purpose is to make use of the remainder of my holydays in completing them at the British Museum, which will be employment & money in the end.

I am exceedingly harrassed with the journey, but that will go off in a day or two, and I will set to work. I know you will grieve for us, but I hope my sister's illness is not worse than many she has got through before. Only I am afraid the fatigue of the journey may affect her general health. You shall have notice how she goes on. In the mean time, accept our kindest thanks.

[*Signature cut off.*]

201. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[No date: endorsed *October 1807.*]

MY DEAR SARAH,

I am two letters in your debt; but it has not been so much from idleness, as a wish first to see how your comical love affair would turn out. You know, I make a pretence not to interfere; but like all old maids I feel a mighty solicitude about the event of love stories. I learn from the Lover that he has not been so remiss in his duty as you supposed. His Effusion, and your complaints of his inconstancy, crossed each other on the road.

He tells me his was a very strange letter, and that probably it has affronted you. That it was a strange letter I can readily believe; but that you were affronted by a strange letter is not so easy for me to conceive, that not being your way of taking things. But however it be, let some answer come, either to him, or else to me, showing cause why you do not answer him. And pray, by all means, preserve the said letter, that I may one day have the pleasure of seeing how Mr. Hazlitt treats of love.

I was at your brother's on Thursday. Mrs. S. tells me she has not written, because she does not like to put you to the expense of postage. They are very well. Little Missy thrives amazingly. Mrs. Stoddart conjectures she is in the family way again; and those kind of conjectures generally prove too true. Your other sister-in-law, Mrs. Hazlitt, was brought to bed last week of a boy: so that you are likely to have plenty of nephews and nieces.

Yesterday evening we were at Rickman's; and who should we find there but Hazlitt; though, if you do not know it was his first invitation there, it will not surprise you as much as it did us. We were very much pleased, because we dearly love our friends to be respected by our friends.

The most remarkable events of the evening were, that we had a very fine pine-apple; that Mr. Phillips, Mr. Lamb, and Mr. Hazlitt played at Cribbage in the most polite and gentlemanly manner possible—and that I won two rubbers at whist.

I am glad Aunty left you some business to do. Our compliments to her and your Mother. Is it as cold at Winterslow as it is here? How do the Lions go on? I am better, and Charles is tolerably well. Godwin's new Tragedy will probably be damned the latter end of next week. Charles has written the Prologue. Prologues and Epilogues will be his death. If you know the extent of Mrs. Reynolds' poverty, you will be glad to hear Mr. Norris has got ten pounds a year for her from the Temple Society. She will be able to make out pretty well now.

Farewell—Determine as wisely as you can in regard to Hazlitt; and, if your determination is to have him, Heaven send you many happy years together. If I am not mistaken, I have concluded letters on the Corydon Courtship with this same wish. I hope it is not ominous of change; for if I were sure you would not be

quite starved to death, nor beaten to a mummy, I should like to see Hazlitt and you come together, if (as Charles observes) it were only for the joke sake.

Write instantly to me.

Yours most affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Saturday morning.

[The reference to Godwin's tragedy, *Faulkener*, which was produced on 16th December 1807, would indicate a later date, except that that play was so frequently postponed.

The lover this time is, at last, William Hazlitt. Miss Stoddart was not his first love; some time before he had wished to marry a Miss Railton of Liverpool; then, in the Lakes, he had had passages with a farmer's daughter involving a ducking at the hands of jealous rivals; while De Quincey would have us believe that Hazlitt proposed to Dorothy Wordsworth. But it was Sarah Stoddart whom he was destined to marry. A specimen of Hazlitt's love letters (which Mary Lamb wished to see) will be found in W. C. Hazlitt's *Memoirs of William Hazlitt*, vol. i, page 153. The marriage turned out anything but a joke.

Mrs. Reynolds's poverty was in later years further relieved by an annuity of £30 from Charles Lamb.]

202. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

Dec. 21, 1807.

MY DEAR SARAH,

I have deferred answering your last letter, in hopes of being able to give you some intelligence that might be useful to you; for I every day expected that Hazlitt or you would communicate the affair to your brother; but, as the Doctor is silent upon the subject, I conclude he yet knows nothing of the matter. You desire my advice; and therefore I tell you I think you ought to tell your brother as soon as possible; for, at present, he is on very friendly visiting terms with Hazlitt, and, if he is not offended by a too long concealment, will do every thing in his power to serve you. If you chuse that I should tell him, I will; but I think it would come better from you. If you can persuade Hazlitt to mention it, that would be still better; for I know your brother would be unwilling to give credit to you, because you deceived yourself in regard to Corydon. Hazlitt, I know, is shy of speaking first; but I think it of such great importance to

you to have your brother friendly in the business, that, if you can overcome his reluctance, it would be a great point gained. For you must begin the world with ready money—at least an hundred pound; for, if you once go into furnished lodgings, you will never be able to lay by money to buy furniture.

If you obtain your brother's approbation, he might assist you, either by lending or otherwise. I have a great opinion of his generosity, where he thinks it would be useful.

Hazlitt's brother is mightily pleased with the match; but he says you must have furniture, and be clear in the world at first setting out, or you will be always behindhand. He also said he would give you what furniture he could spare. I am afraid you can bring but few things away from your house. What a pity that you have laid out so much money on your cottage!—that money would have just done. I most heartily congratulate you on having so well got over your first difficulties; and, now that it is quite settled, let us have no more fears. I now mean not only to hope and wish, but to persuade myself, that you will be very happy together.

Endeavour to keep your mind as easy as you can. You ought to begin the world with a good stock of health and spirits: it is quite as necessary as ready money at first setting out. Do not teize yourself about coming to town. When your brother learns how things are going on, we shall consult him about meetings and so forth; but, at present, any hasty step of that kind would not answer, I know. If Hazlitt were to go down to Salisbury, or you were to come up here, without consulting your brother, you know it would never do.

Charles is just come in to dinner; he desires his love and best wishes.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Monday morning.

[Mary Lamb's next letter, 12th February 1808, shows that when Dr. Stoddart was at length told of the engagement he resented it.

The next letter contains the beginning of an elaborate hoax maintained by Lamb and Hume (who was Joseph Hume, a clerk in the Victualling Office at Somerset House, and the author of a translation of Tasso), in which Hazlitt, although the victim, played his part.]

203. CHARLES LAMB TO JOSEPH HUME

29 Dec., 1807.

Alas, sir, I cannot be among you. My fate is still not to know on which side my bread is butter'd. I hang between two Engagements perpetually, and the worst always comes first. The Devil always takes care to clap in with a retainer when he sees God about to offer a fee—cold bones of mutton and leather-roasted potatoes at Pimlico at ten must carry it away from a certain Turkey and a contingent plumb-pudding at Montpelier at four (I always spell plumb-pudding with a *b*, p-l-u-m-*b*—I think it reads fatter and more suetty).

I suppose you know what has happen'd to our poor friend Hazlitt. If not, take it as I read it in the Morning Post or Fashionable World of this morning:—

'Last night Mr. H., a portrait painter in Southampton Buildings, Holborn, put an end to his existence by cutting his throat in a shocking manner. It is supposed that he must have committed his purpose with a pallet knife, as the edges of the cicatrice or wound were found besmeared with a yellow consistence, but the knife could not be found. The reasons of this rash act are not assigned; an unfortunate passion has been mentioned; but nothing certain is known. The deceased was subject to hypochondria, low spirits, but he had lately seemed better, having paid more than usual attention to his dress and person. Besides being a painter, he had written some pretty things in prose and verse.'

God bless me, ten o'clock! I have cut out the paragraph, and will shew it you entire. I have not time to transcribe more.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

[In reply came one from Hume, dated 11th January 1808, referring to a humble petition and remonstrance by Hazlitt, dated 10th January 1808, showing that he is not dead. The petition will be found in full in *Lamb and Hazlitt*. It ends thus:

With all the sincerity of a man doubtful between life and death, the petitioner declares that he looks upon the said Charles Lamb as the ring-leader in this unjust conspiracy against him, and as the sole cause and author

of the jeopardy he is in: but that as losers have leave to speak, he must say, that, if it were not for a poem he wrote on Tobacco about two years ago, a farce called *Mr. H*—— he brought out last winter with more wit than discretion in it, some prologues and epilogues he has since written with good success, and some lively notes he is at present writing on dead authors, he sees no reason why he should not be considered as much a dead man as himself, and the undertaker spoken to accordingly.

The next letter continues the joke.]

204. TO JOSEPH HUME

12 January, 1808.

DEAR SIR,

The strange rumours which have been spread about since the death of our respected friend, as well as some things which have come under my own observation, which I do not care to trust to the ordinary communication of a Post, but reserve them for the especial confidence of your most valued ear in private,—these things, without much help from a rainy day or time of the year which usually disposes men to sadness, have contributed to make me not a little serious and thoughtful of late. I have run over in my mind the various treatises which I have perused in the course of a studious, and, I hope, innocently employed life, on the nature of disembodied Spirits and the causes of their revisiting the earth. The fact I will take for granted; presuming that I am not addressing an Atheist. I find the most commonly assigned reason to be, *for the revealing of hidden Treasures which the Deceased had hoarded up in his or her Lifetime.* Now though I cannot sufficiently admire the providence of God who by this means has ofttimes restored great heaps of Gold and Silver to the circulation of the Living, thereby sparing the iterately plowed and now almost effœte wombs of Peru & Mexico, which would need another Sarah's miracle to replenish, yet in the particular case of the Defunct I cannot but suspect some other cause, and not this, to have called him from his six foot bed of earth. For it is highly improbable that he should have accumulated any such vast treasures, for the revealing of which a miracle was

needed, without some suspicion of the fact among his friends during his Lifetime. I for my part always looked upon our dear friend as a man rich rather in the gifts of his mind than in earthly treasures. He had few rents or comings in, that I was ever aware of, small (if any) landed property, and by all that I could witness he subsisted more upon the well-timed contributions of a few chosen friends who knew his worth, than upon any Estate which could properly be called his own. I myself have contributed my part. God knows, I speak not this in reproach. I have never taken, nor indeed did the deceased offer, any *written acknowledgments* of the various sums which he has had of me, by which I could make the fact manifest to the legal eye of an Executor or Administrator. He was not a Man to affect these niceties in his transactions with his friends. He would often say, money was nothing between intimate acquaintances, that Golden Streams had no Ebb, that a Purse mouth never regorged, that God loved a chearful giver but the Devil hated a free taker, that a paid Loan makes angels groan, with many such like sayings: he had always free and generous notions about money. His nearest friends know this best. Induced by these considerations I give up that commonly received notion of Revealable Treasures in our friend's case. Neither am I too forward to adopt that vulgar superstition of some hidden Murder to be brought to light; which yet I do not universally reject: for when I revolve, that the Defunct was naturally of a discoursible and communicative temper (though of a gloomy and close aspect, as born under Saturn), a great repeater of conversations which he generally carried away verbatim and would repeat with syllabic exactness in the next company where he was received (by which means I that have staid at home have often reaped the profit of his travels without stirring from my elbow chair), I cannot think that if He had been present at so remarkable circumstance as a murder he would so soon have forgotten it as to make no mention of it at the next place where he dined or supt, or that he could have restrained himself from giving the particulars of a matter of fact like that in his life time. I am sure I have often heard him dilate upon occurrences of a much less interesting sort than that in question. I am most inclined to support that opinion which favors the Establishing of some Speculative Point in Religion:

a frequent cause, says Wierus, for Spirits returning to the Earth, to confute Atheists, &c. When I consider the Education which our friend received from a venerable Parent, his religious destination, his nurture at a Seminary appropriated to young Ministers: but whatever the cause of this re-appearance may prove to be, we may now with truth assert that our deceased friend has attained to one object of his pursuits, one hour's separate existence gives a dead man clearer notions of metaphysics than all the treatises which in this state of carnal entanglement the least-immersed spirit can out-spin. It is good to leave such subjects to that period when we shall have no Heads to ache, no brains to distort, no faces to lengthen, no clothes to neglect. Had our dear friend attended to this, he might have shewn his airy form in courts and ball rooms, whispered the fair, ogled, sung, danced, and known just as much of those subjects as it is probable he ever knew previous to his death: for I always take it, that a disposition to such sort of enquiries . . . and ends in lunacy and dirty linen. You have my opinions.

Excuse me, in my last note I forgot the black sealing wax, &c: but sorrow, heart-felt sorrow, attends not to punctilios.

['Wierus.' Often cited in Burton's *Anatomy* in the 'Digression of Spirits.']

205. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[P.M. *12th February 1808.*]

MY DEAR SARAH,

I have sent your letter and drawing off to Wem, Hazlitt's father's in Shropshire, where I conjecture Hazlitt is. He left town on Saturday afternoon, without telling us where he was going. He seemed very impatient at not hearing from you. He was very ill and I suppose is gone home to his father's to be nursed.

I find Hazlitt has mentioned to you an intention which we had of asking you up to town, which we were bent on doing, but having named it since to your brother, the Doctor expressed a strong desire that you should not come to town to be at any other

house than his own, for he said that it would have a very strange appearance. His wife's father is coming to be with them till near the end of April, after which time he shall have full room for you. And if you are to be married, he wishes that you should be married with all the proper decorums, *from his house*. Now though we should be willing to run any hazards of disobliging him, if there were no other means of your and Hazlitt's meeting, yet as he seems so friendly to the match, it would not be worth while to alienate him from you and ourselves too, for the slight accommodation which the difference of a few weeks would make, provided always, and be it understood, that if you and H. made up your minds to be married before the time in which you can be at your brother's, our house stands open and most ready at a moment's notice to receive you. Only we would not quarrel unnecessarily with your brother. Let there be a clear necessity shewn, and we will quarrel with any body's brother. Now though I have written to the above effect, I hope you will not conceive, but that both my brother & I had looked forward to your coming with unmixed pleasure, and we are really disappointed at your brother's declaration, for next to the pleasure of being married, is the pleasure of making, or helping marriages forward.

We wish to hear from you, that you do not take the *seeming change* of purpose in ill part; for it is but *seeming* on our part; for it was my brother's suggestion, by him first mentioned to Hazlitt, and cordially approved by me; but your brother has set his face against it, and it is better to take him along with us, in our plans, if he will good-naturedly go along with us, than not.

The reason I have not written lately has been that I thought it better to leave you all to the workings of your own minds in this momentous affair, in which the inclinations of a bye-stander have a right to form a wish, but not to give a vote.

Being, with the help of wide lines, at the end of my last page, I conclude with our kind wishes, and prayers for the best.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

H.'s direction is (if he is there) at Wem in Shropshire. I

suppose as letters must come to London first, you had better inclose them, while he is there, for my brother in London.

[The Rev. William Hazlitt, Hazlitt's father (1737–1820), was a Unitarian minister at Wem, in Shropshire. Hazlitt's mother was Grace Loftus of Wisbech, a farmer's daughter.

The drawing referred to, says W. C. Hazlitt, was a sketch of Middleton Cottage, Miss Stoddart's house at Winterslow (see next letter).]

206. CHARLES LAMB TO THE REV. WILLIAM HAZLITT

Temple, *18th February 1808.*

SIR,

I am truly concerned that any mistake of mine should have caused you uneasiness, but I hope we have got a clue to William's absence, which may clear up all apprehensions. The people where he lodges in town have received direction from him to forward one or two of his shirts to a place called Winterslow, in the county of Hants [Wilts] (not far from Salisbury), where the lady lives whose Cottage, pictured upon a card, if you opened my letter you have doubtless seen, and though we have had no explanation of the mystery since, we shrewdly suspect that at the time of writing that Letter which has given you all this trouble, a certain son of yours (who is both Painter and Author) was at her elbow, and did assist in framing that very Cartoon which was sent to amuse and mislead us in town, as to the real place of his destination.

And some words at the back of the said Cartoon, which we had not marked so narrowly before, by the similarity of the handwriting to William's, do very much confirm the suspicion. If our theory be right, they have had the pleasure of their jest, and I am afraid you have paid for it in anxiety. But I hope your uneasiness will now be removed, and you will pardon a suspense occasioned by LOVE, who does so many worse mischiefs every day.

The letter to the people where William lodges says, moreover, that he shall be in town in a fortnight.

My sister joins in respects to you and Mrs. Hazlitt, and in our

kindest remembrances and wishes for the restoration of Peggy's health.

I am, Sir, your humble servt., CH. LAMB.

[Sarah Stoddart's letter containing the drawing referred to had been sent by the Lambs to William Hazlitt at Wem, whereas Hazlitt, instead of seeking his father's roof as arranged, had sought his betrothed's, and had himself helped in the mystification.

Concerning the *Tales from Shakespear* Manning had written to Lamb on 7th January 1808, beginning:

> Oh Lamb of the India house, that crackest away the best puns in the World, vouchsafe to hear me. What I say will be very short & not less sweet, unless it get spoil'd in a long voyage. Why did not you write to me by the direct fleet? Why did not you send me out your new book—gilt, & adorned with cuts? I take it much amiss.

On 3rd March 1808 Manning had written again, with another request for the *Tales*:

> You are the last person I write to, Lamb, by this fleet. I'm off to-morrow morning, I hope, for the Coast of Cochin China—what I shall do there, I 'll tell you another time. You don't deserve a line from me—why did not you write by the Direct fleet? Why did not you send me your Shakespeare's tales? . . .

The letter that follows probably crossed.]

207. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Dated at end: *26th February 1808*.]

DEAR MISSIONARY,

Your letters from the farthest ends of the world have arrived safe. Mary is very thankful for your remembrance of her, and with the less suspicion of mercenariness, as the silk, the *symbolum materiale* of your friendship, has not yet appeared. I think Horace says somewhere, *nox longa*. I would not impute negligence or unhandsome delays to a person whom you have honoured with your confidence; but I have not heard of the silk, or of Mr. Knox, save by your letter. Maybe he expects the first advances! or it may be that he has not succeeded in getting the article on shore, for it is among the *res prohibitæ et non nisi smuggle-ationis viâ fruendæ*. But so it is, in the friendships between *wicked men*, the very expressions of their good-will cannot but be sinful.

Splendida vitia at best. Stay, while I remember it—Mrs. Holcroft was safely delivered of a girl some day in last week. Mother and child doing well. Mr. Holcroft has been attack'd with severe rheumatism. They have moved to Clipstone Street. I suppose you know my farce was damned. The noise still rings in my ears. Was you ever in the pillory?—being damned is something like that. Godwin keeps a shop in Skinner Street, Snow Hill, he is turned children's bookseller, and sells penny, twopenny, threepenny, and fourpenny books. Sometimes he gets an order for the dearer sort of Books. (Mind, all that I tell you in this letter is true.) A treaty of marriage is on foot between William Hazlitt and Miss Stoddart. Something about settlements only retards it. She has somewhere about £80 a year, to be £120 when her mother dies. He has no settlement except what he can claim from the Parish. *Pauper est Cinna, sed tamen amat.* The thing is therefore in abeyance. But there is love o' both sides. Little Fenwick (you don't see the connexion of ideas here, how the devil should you?) is in the rules of the Fleet. Cruel creditors! operation of iniquitous laws! is Magna Charta then a mockery? Why, in general (here I suppose you to ask a question) my spirits are pretty good, but I have my depressions, black as a smith's beard, Vulcanic, Stygian. At such times I have recourse to a pipe, which is like not being at home to a dun; he comes again with tenfold bitterness the next day.—(Mind, I am not in debt, I only borrow a similitude from others; it shows imagination.) I have done two books since the failure of my farce; they will both be out this summer. The one is a juvenile book—'The Adventures of Ulysses,' intended to be an introduction to the reading of Telemachus! It is done out of the Odyssey, not from the Greek: I would not mislead you; nor yet from Pope's Odyssey, but from an older translation of one Chapman. The 'Shakespear Tales' suggested the doing it. Godwin is in both those cases my bookseller. The other is done for Longman, and is 'Specimens of English Dramatic Poets contemporary with Shakespear.' Specimens are becoming fashionable. We have—'Specimens of Ancient English Poets,' 'Specimens of Modern English Poets,' 'Specimens of Ancient English Prose Writers,' without end. They used to be called 'Beauties.' You have seen 'Beauties of Shakespear?' so have many people that never saw

any beauties in Shakespear. Longman is to print it, and be at all the expense and risk; and I am to share the profits after all deductions; *i.e.* a year or two hence I must pocket what they please to tell me is due to me. But the book is such as I am glad there should be. It is done out of old plays at the Museum and out of Dodsley's collection, &c. It is to have notes. So I go creeping on since I was lamed with that cursed fall from off the top of Drury-Lane Theatre into the pit, something more than a year ago. However, I have been free of the house ever since, and the house was pretty free with me upon that occasion. Damn 'em, how they hissed! It was not a hiss neither, but a sort of a frantic yell, like a congregation of mad geese, with roaring something like bears, mows and mops like apes, sometimes snakes, that hiss'd me into madness. 'Twas like St. Anthony's temptations. Mercy on us, that God should give his favourite children, men, mouths to speak with, to discourse rationally, to promise smoothly, to flatter agreeably, to encourage warmly, to counsel wisely: to sing with, to drink with, and to kiss with: and that they should turn them into mouths of adders, bears, wolves, hyenas, and whistle like tempests, and emit breath through them like distillations of aspic poison, to asperse and vilify the innocent labours of their fellow-creatures who are desirous to please them! God be pleased to make the breath stink and the teeth rot out of them all therefore! Make them a reproach, and all that pass by them to loll out their tongue at them! Blind mouths! as Milton somewhere calls them. Do you like Braham's singing? The little Jew has bewitched me. I follow him like as the boys followed Tom the Piper. He cured me of melancholy, as David cured Saul; but I don't throw stones at him, as Saul did at David in payment. I was insensible to music till he gave me a new sense. O, that you could go to the new opera of 'Kais' to-night! 'Tis all about Eastern manners; it would just suit you. It describes the wild Arabs, wandering Egyptians, lying dervishes, and all that sort of people, to a hair. You needn't ha' gone so far to see what you see, if you saw it as I do every night at Drury-lane Theatre. Braham's singing, when it is impassioned, is finer than Mrs. Siddons's or Mr. Kemble's acting; and when it is not impassioned, it is as good as hearing a person of fine sense talking. The brave little Jew! Old Sergeant Hill is dead.

Mrs. Rickman is in the family way. It is thought that Hazlitt will have children, if he marries Miss Stoddart. I made a pun the other day, and palmed it upon Holcroft, who grinned like a Cheshire cat. (Why do cats grin in Cheshire?—Because it was once a county palatine and the cats cannot help laughing whenever they think of it, though I see no great joke in it.) I said that Holcroft said, being asked who were the best dramatic writers of the day, 'HOOK AND I.' Mr. Hook is author of several pieces, 'Tekeli,' &c. You know what *hooks and eyes* are, don't you? They are what little boys do up their breeches with. Your letter had many things in it hard to be understood: the puns were ready and Swift-like; but don't you begin to be melancholy in the midst of Eastern customs! 'The mind does not easily conform to foreign usages, even in trifles: it requires something that it has been familiar with.' That begins one of Dr. Hawkesworth's papers in the 'Adventurer,' and is, I think, as sensible a remark as ever fell from the Doctor's mouth. Do you know Watford in Hertfordshire? it is a pretty village. Louisa goes to school there. They say the governess is a very intelligent managing person, takes care of the morals of the pupils, teaches them something beyond exteriors. Poor Mrs. Beaumont!—Rickman's aunt, she might have been a governess (as both her nieces are) if she had any ability or any education, but I never thought she was good for anything; she is dead and so is her nephew. He was shot in half at Monte Video, that is, not exactly in half, but as you have seen a 3 quarter picture. Stoddart is in England. White is at Christ's Hospital, a wit of the first magnitude, but had rather be thought a gentleman, like Congreve. You know Congreve's repulse which he gave to Voltaire, when he came to visit him as a *literary man*, that he wished to be considered only in the light of a private gentleman. I think the impertinent Frenchman was properly answered. I should just serve any member of the French institute in the same manner, that wished to be introduced to me. Bonaparte has voted 5,000 livres to Davy, the great young English chemist; but it has not arrived. Coleridge has delivered two lectures at the Royal Institution; two more were attended, but he did not come. It is thought he has gone sick upon them. He a'n't well, that's certain. Wordsworth is coming to see him. He sits up

in a two pair of stairs room at the 'Courier' Office, and receives visitors on his close stool. How is Mr. Ball? He has sent for a prospectus of the London Library.

Does any one read at Canton? Lord Moira is President of the Westminster Library. I suppose you might have interest with Sir Joseph Banks to get to be president of any similar institution that should be set up at Canton. I think public reading-rooms the best mode of educating young men. Solitary reading is apt to give the headache. Besides, who knows that you *do* read? There are ten thousand institutions similar to the Royal Institution, which have sprung up from it. There is the London Institution, the Southwark Institution, the Russell Square Rooms Institution, &c.—*College quasi Conlege*, a place where people read together. Wordsworth, the great poet, is coming to town; he is to have apartments in the Mansion House. He says he does not see much difficulty in writing like Shakspeare, if he had a mind to try it. It is clear, then, nothing is wanting but the mind. Even Coleridge a little checked at this hardihood of assertion. Jones of Trinity, I suppose you know he is dead. Dyer came to me the other evening at 11 o'clock, when there was a large room full of company, which I usually get together on a Wednesday evening (all great men have public days), to propose to me to have my face done by a Miss Beetham (or Betham), a miniature painter, some relation to Mrs. Beetham the Profilist or Pattern Mangle woman opposite to St. Dunstan's, to put before my book of Extracts. I declined it.

Well, my dear Manning, talking cannot be infinite; I have said all I have to say; the rest is but remembrances, which we shall bear in our heads of you, while we have heads. Here is a packet of trifles nothing worth; but it is a trifling part of the world where I live; emptiness abounds. But, in fulness of affection, we remain yours, C. L.

[Manning had written in April 1807, saying that a roll of silk was on its way to Mary Lamb. It was, however, another letter, not preserved, which mentioned Mr. Knox as the bearer.

'Nox longa.' Horace, *Epistles*, I. i. 20.

'Res prohibitæ.' Forbidden things to be enjoyed only by smuggling.

Godwin sold books at 41 Skinner Street under his wife's name—M. J. Godwin. At first when he began, in 1805, in Hanway Street, he had used the name of Thomas Hodgkins, his manager.

'Pauper est.' Adapted from Martial, viii. 19.

'Damn 'em, how they hissed!' This passage has in it the germ of Lamb's essay in the *Reflector* two or three years later, 'On the Custom of Hissing at the Theatres' (see vol. i of my edition).

'Blind mouths.' *Lycidas*, 119.

John Braham (? 1774–1856), the great tenor and the composer of 'The Death of Nelson.' Lamb praised him again in his *Elia* essay 'Imperfect Sympathies,' and later wrote an amusing article on Braham's recantation of Hebraism (see *The Religion of Actors*, vol. i of my edition). *Kais*, composed by Braham and Reeve, was produced at Drury Lane, 11th February 1808.

I am reminded that Edward FitzGerald, writing from Woodbridge on 21st March 1878, to his editor, Aldis Wright, says: 'I was looking at Lamb's letter to Manning of 26th February 1808, where he extols Braham, the singer, who (he says) led his Spirit "as the Boys follow Tom the Piper." I had not thought who Tom was: rather acquiesced in some idea of the "pied Piper of Hamelin"; and not half an hour after, chancing to take down Browne's Britannia's Pastorals, found Tom against the Maypole with a ring of Dancers about him. I suppose Tom survived in folk lore—till dear Lamb's time; but how he a Cockney knew of it, I don't know.'

'Old Sergeant Hill.' George Hill (1716–1808), nicknamed Serjeant Labyrinth, the hero of many stories of absence of mind. He would have appealed to Manning on account of his mathematical abilities. He died on 21st February.

'Hook and I.' This pun is attributed also to others, who may very easily have made it independently. Theodore Hook was then only nineteen, but had already written *Tekeli*, a melodrama, and several farces. Talfourd omits the reference to breeches.

'Dr. Hawkesworth.' John Hawkesworth, LL.D. (? 1715–73), the editor of Swift, a director of the East India Company, and the friend of Johnson whom he imitated in the *Adventurer*. He also made one of the translations of Fénelon's *Télémaque*, to which Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses* was to serve as prologue.

James White, Lamb's friend and the author of *Falstaff's Letters*, was for many years a clerk in the Treasurer's office at Christ's Hospital. Later he founded an advertisement agency, which still exists.

'Congreve's repulse.' The story is told by Johnson in the *Lives of the Poets*. Congreve 'disgusted him [Voltaire] by the despicable foppery of desiring to be considered not as an author but a gentleman; to which the Frenchman replied, "that, if he had been only a gentleman, he should not have come to visit him."'

'Davy.' Afterwards Sir Humphry Davy, and now one of Coleridge's correspondents. He had been awarded the Napoleon prize of 3,000 (not 5,000) francs for his discoveries announced in the *Philosophical Transactions* for the year 1807.

Coleridge's lectures. Coleridge delivered the first on 12th January 1808, and the second on 5th February. The third and fourth were eventually delivered some time before 3rd April. The subject was not Taste but Poetry. Coleridge's rooms over the *Courier* office at No. 348 Strand are described by De Quincey in his *Works*, vol. ii (1863 edition), page 98.

It was Coleridge's illness that was bringing Wordsworth to town, to be followed by Southey, largely by the instrumentality of Charles and Mary Lamb. It is conjectured that Coleridge was just then more than usually in the power of drugs.

Sir Joseph Banks, as President of the Royal Society, had written a letter to the East India Company supporting Manning's wish to practise as a doctor in Canton.

The similar associations that sprang up in imitation of the Royal Institution have all vanished, except the London Institution in Finsbury Circus.

'Writing like Shakspeare.' This passage was omitted by Talfourd. He seems to have shown it to Crabb Robinson, just after Lamb's death, as one of the things that could not be published. Robinson (or Robinson's editor, Dr. Sadler), in recording the event, substitutes a dash for Wordsworth's name.

Miss Betham was Miss Mary Matilda Betham (1776–1852), afterwards a correspondent of Lamb. We shall soon meet her again. She had written a *Biographical Dictionary of the Celebrated Women of Every Age and Country*, 1804, and some poems. Among her sitters were Coleridge and Mrs. Coleridge and, later, Randal Norris. I cannot find that she painted Lamb. The Profilist opposite St. Dunstan's was, I take it, E. Beetham, Patent Washing-Mill Maker at 27 Fleet Street. I find this in the 1808 Directory. The shop was close to Inner Temple Lane.]

208. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

March 11, 1808.

DEAR GODWIN,

The giant's vomit was perfectly nauseous, and I am glad you pointed it out. I have removed the objection. To the other passages I can find no other objection but what you may bring to numberless passages besides, such as of Scylla snatching up the six men, etc., that is to say, they are lively images of *shocking* things. If you want a book, which is not occasionally to *shock*, you should not have thought of a tale which was so full of anthropophagi and wonders. I cannot alter these things without enervating the Book, and I will not alter them if the penalty should be that you and all the London booksellers should refuse it. But speaking as author to author, I must say that I think *the terrible* in those two passages seems to me so much to preponderate over the nauseous, as to make them rather fine than disgusting. Who is to read them, I don't know: who is it that reads Tales of Terror and Mysteries of Udolpho? Such things sell. I only say that I will not consent to alter such passages, which I know to be

some of the best in the book. As an author I say to you an author, Touch not my work. As to a bookseller I say, Take the work such as it is, or refuse it. You are as free to refuse it as when we first talked of it. As to a friend I say, Don't plague yourself and me with nonsensical objections. I assure you I will not alter one more word.

[This letter refers to the proofs of Lamb's *Adventures of Ulysses*, his prose paraphrase for children of Chapman's translation of the *Odyssey*, which Mrs. Godwin was publishing. Godwin had written the following letter:

Skinner Street, 10th March 1808.

DEAR LAMB,—I address you with all humility, because I know you to be *tenax propositi*. Hear me, I entreat you, with patience.

It is strange with what different feelings an author and a bookseller looks at the same manuscript. I know this by experience: I was an author, I am a bookseller. The author thinks what will conduce to his honour: the bookseller what will cause his commodities to sell.

You, or some other wise man, I have heard to say, It is children that read children's books, when they are read, but it is parents that choose them. The critical thought of the tradesman put itself therefore into the place of the parent, and what the parent will condemn.

We live in squeamish days. Amid the beauties of your manuscript, of which no man can think more highly than I do, what will the squeamish say to such expressions as these: 'devoured their limbs, yet warm and trembling, lapping the blood,' p. 10. Or to the giant's vomit, p. 14; or to the minute and shocking description of the extinguishing the giant's eye in the page following. You, I daresay, have no formed plan of excluding the female sex from among your readers, and I, as a bookseller, must consider that if you have you exclude one half of the human species.

Nothing is more easy than to modify these things if you please, and nothing, I think, is more indispensable.

Give me, as soon as possible, your thoughts on the matter.

I should also like a preface. Half our customers know not Homer, or know him only as you and I know the lost authors of antiquity. What can be more proper than to mention one or two of those obvious recommendations of his works, which must lead every human creature to desire a nearer acquaintance.—

Believe me, ever faithfully yours,

W. GODWIN.

'Tenax propositi': Firm in sticking to your plans. Horace, *Odes*, III. iii. 1.

As a glance at the *Adventures of Ulysses* will show, Lamb did not make the alteration on pages 10 or 15, although the giant's vomit has disappeared. The

Tales of Terror, 1801, were by Matthew Gregory Lewis, 'Monk Lewis,' as he was called, and the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, 1794, by Mrs. Radcliffe.

We now come to the first letter to Henry Crabb Robinson.]

209. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated at end: *12th March 1808.*]

DEAR SIR,

Wordsworth breakfasts with me on Tuesday morning next; he goes to Mrs. Clarkson the next day, and will be glad to meet you before he goes. Can you come to us before nine or at nine that morning? I am afraid, *W.* is so engaged with Coleridge, who is ill, we cannot have him in an evening. If I do not hear from you, I will expect you to breakfast on Tuesday.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Saturday, 12 Mar., 1808.

[Wordsworth left on 3rd April, by which time Coleridge was sufficiently recovered to give two more lectures. The series closed in June. Coleridge then went to Bury St. Edmunds to see the Clarksons and next to Grasmere, to the Wordsworths. His separation from Mrs. Coleridge had already occurred, he and his wife remaining, however, on friendly terms.]

210. MARY LAMB TO SARAH STODDART

[P.M. *16th March 1808.*]

MY DEAR SARAH,

Do not be very angry that I have not written to you. I have promised your brother to be at your wedding, and that favor you must accept as an atonement for my offences—you have been in no want of correspondence lately, and I wished to leave you both to your own inventions.

The border you are working for me I prize at a very high rate because I consider it is the last work you can do for me, the time so fast approaching when you must no longer work for your friends. Yet my old fault of giving away presents has not left me, and I am desirous of even giving away this your last gift.

I had intended to have given it away without your knowledge, but I have intrusted my secret to Hazlitt, and I suppose it will not remain a secret long, so I condescend to consult you. It is to Miss Hazlitt, to whose superior claim I wish to give up my right to this precious worked border. Her brother William is her great favorite, and she would be pleased to possess his bride's last work. Are you not to give the fellow-border to one sister-in-law, and therefore has she not a just claim to it?—I never heard in the annals of weddings (since the days of Nausicaa, and she only washed her old gowns for that purpose) that the brides ever furnished the apparel of their maids. Besides, I can be completely clad in your work without it, for the spotted muslin will serve both for cap and hat (Nota bene, my hat is the same as yours) and the gown you sprigged for me has never been made up, therefore I can wear that—Or, if you like better, I will make up a new silk which Manning has sent me from China. Manning would like to hear I wore it for the first time at your wedding. It is a very pretty light colour, but there is an objection (besides not being your work and that is a very serious objection) and that is, Mrs. Hazlitt tells me that all Winterslow would be in an uproar if the bridemaid was to be dressed in anything but white, and although it is a very light colour I confess we cannot call it white, being a sort of a dead-whiteish-bloom colour; then silk, perhaps, in a morning is not so proper, though the occasion, so joyful, might justify a full dress. Determine for me in this perplexity between the sprig and the China-Manning silk. But do not contradict my whim about Miss Hazlitt having the border, for I have set my heart upon the matter: if you agree with me in this I shall think you have forgiven me for giving away your pin; and that was a *mad* trick, but I had many obligations and no money. I repent me of the deed, wishing I had it now to send to Miss H. with the border, and I cannot, will not, give her the Doctor's pin, for having never had any presents from gentlemen in my young days, I highly prize all they now give me, thinking my latter days are better than my former.

You must send this same border in your own name to Miss Hazlitt, which will save me the disgrace of giving away your gift, and make it amount merely to civil refusal.

I shall have no present to give you on your marriage, nor do I

expect that I shall be rich enough to give anything to baby at the first christening, but at the second, or third child's I hope to have a coral or so to spare out of my own earnings. Do not ask me to be Godmother, for I have an objection to that—but there is I believe, no serious duties attached to a bride's maid, therefore I come with a willing mind, bringing nothing with me but many wishes, and not a few hopes, and a very little of fears of happy years to come.

I am dear Sarah

Yours ever most affectionately

M. LAMB.

What has Charles done that nobody invites him to the wedding?

[The wedding was on 1st May 1808. Originally it was intended to perform the ceremony at Winterslow, but London was actually the place: St. Andrew's, Holborn. Mary Lamb was a bridesmaid and Charles Lamb was present. He told Southey in a letter some years after: 'I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Anything awful makes me laugh.'

The episode of Nausicaa, to which Mary Lamb refers, had just been rewritten by Charles Lamb in the *Adventures of Ulysses*.]

211. CHARLES LAMB TO GEORGE DYER

From my Desk in Leadenhall Street.

[No date: probably *5th July 1808*.]

DEAR DYER,

Coleridge is not so bad as your fears have represented him; it is true that he is Bury'd, altho' he is not dead; to understand this quibble you must know that he is at Bury St. Edmunds, relaxing, after the fatigues of lecturing and Londonizing. The little Rickmaness, whom you enquire after so kindly, thrives and grows apace; she is already a prattler, and 'tis thought that on some future day she may be a speaker. We hold our weekly meetings still at No. 16, where altho' we are not so high as the top of Malvern, we are involved in almost as much mist. Miss B[etham]'s merit 'in every point of view,' I am not disposed to question, altho' I have not been indulged with any view of that lady, back, side, or front—*fie!* Dyer, to praise a female in such

common market phrases—you who are held so courtly and so attentive. My book is not yet out, that is, not my 'Extracts,' my 'Ulysses' is, and waits your acceptance. When you shall come to town, I hope to present you both together—never think of buying the 'Extracts'—half guinea books were never calculated for my friends. Those poets have started up since your departure; William Hazlitt, your friend and mine, is putting to press a collection of verses, chiefly amatory, some of them pretty enough. How these painters encroach on our province! There's Hoppner, Shee, Westall, and I don't know who besides, and Tresham. It seems on confession, that they are not at the top of their own art, when they seek to eke out their fame with the assistance of another's; no large tea-dealer sells cheese; no great silversmith sells razor-strops; it is only your petty dealers who mix commodities. If Nero had been a great Emperor, he would never have played the Violoncello! Who ever caught you, Dyer, designing a landscape, or taking a likeness? I have no more to add, who am the friend of virtue, poetry, painting, therefore in an especial manner,

Unalterably Thine

C. LAMB.

['No. 16.' Mitre Court Buildings, where Lamb had been established with Mary since 1800. Next year he was to move to 4, Inner Temple Lane.

'My "Extracts".' The *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, mentioned by Lamb in his letter to Manning, p. 48. See also the letter to Coleridge, p. 73, and note on p. 76.

Hazlitt, I think, did not persevere with his intention to publish his poems; but of the artist-authors named, John Hoppner produced in 1805 *Oriental Tales translated into verse*; Sir Martin Archer Shee, in the same year, *Rhymes on Art, or the Remonstrance of a Painter*; Richard Westall wrote and illustrated *A Day in Spring*, 1808, and Henry Tresham, the historical painter, had, up to the time of writing, brought out four volumes of verse.

On 18th August 1808 Manning wrote from Macao:

P.S. You neglect me sadly, Lamb! I have written quires to you; & you are never inquiring after me. Considering the distance, the length of time, &c., there ought to be Realms [? reams] between us. Goodbye. Best love to Mary.]

212. JOINT LETTER OF MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT (LATE STODDART)

December 10th, 1808.

MY DEAR SARAH,

I hear of you from your brother; but you do not write yourself, nor does Hazlitt. I beg that one or both of you will amend this fault as speedily as possible, for I am very anxious to hear of your health. I hope, as you say nothing about your fall to your brother, you are perfectly recovered from the effects of it.

You cannot think how very much we miss you and H. of a Wednesday evening. All the glory of the night, I may say, is at an end. Phillips makes his jokes, and there is no one to applaud him; Rickman argues, and there is no one to oppose him.

The worst miss of all to me is, that, when we are in the dismals, there is now no hope of relief from any quarter whatsoever. Hazlitt was most brilliant, most ornamental, as a Wednesday-man; but he was a more useful one on common days, when he dropt in after a quarrel or a fit of the glooms. The Skeffington is quite out now, my brother having got drunk with claret and Tom Sheridan. This visit, and the occasion of it, is a profound secret, and therefore I tell it to nobody but you and Mrs. Reynolds. Through the medium of Wroughton, there came an invitation and proposal from T. S., that C. L. should write some scenes in a speaking pantomime, the other parts of which Tom now, and his father formerly, have manufactured between them. So, in the Christmas holydays, my brother and his two great associates, we expect, will be all three damned together: this is, I mean, if Charles's share, which is done and sent in, is accepted.

I left this unfinished yesterday, in the hope that my brother would have done it for me: his reason for refusing me was 'no exquisite reason'; for it was, because he must write a letter to Manning in three or four weeks, and therefore he could not be always writing letters, he said. I wanted him to tell your husband about a great work which Godwin is going to publish, to enlighten the world once more, and I shall not be able to make out what it is. He (Godwin) took his usual walk one evening, a fortnight since, to the end of Hatton Garden and back again.

During that walk, a thought came into his mind, which he instantly set down and improved upon, till he brought it, in seven or eight days, into the compass of a reasonable sized pamphlet. To propose a subscription to all well disposed people, to raise a certain sum of money, to be expended in the care of a cheap monument for the former and the future great dead men, —the monument to be a white cross, with a wooden slab at the end, telling their names and qualifications. This wooden slab and white cross to be perpetuated to the end of time. To survive the fall of empires and the destruction of cities by means of a map, which was, in case of an insurrection among the people, or any other cause by which a city or country may be destroyed, to be carefully preserved; and then, when things got again into their usual order, the white-cross-wooden-slab-makers were to go to work again, and set them in their former places. This, as nearly as I can tell you, is the sum and substance of it, but it is written remarkably well, in his very best manner; for the proposal (which seems to me very like throwing salt on a sparrow's tail to catch him) occupies but half a page, which is followed by very fine writing on the benefits he conjectures would follow if it were done. Very excellent thoughts on death, and on our feelings concerning dead friends, and the advantages an old country has over a new one, even in the slender memorials we have of great men who once flourished.

Charles is come home, and wants his dinner; and so the dead men must be no more thought on: tell us how you go on, and how you like Winterslow and winter evenings.

Noales [Knowles] has not got back again, but he is in better spirits. John Hazlitt was here on Wednesday, very sober.

Our love to Hazlitt.

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

II. Charles Lamb to Sarah Hazlitt

Saturday.

There came this morning a printed prospectus from S. T. Coleridge, Grasmere, of a weekly paper, to be called The Friend

—a flaming prospectus—I have no time to give the heads of it—to commence first Saturday in January. There came also a notice of a Turkey from Mr. Clarkson, which I am more sanguine in expecting the accomplishment of than I am of Coleridge's prophecy. C. LAMB.

['The Skeffington.' Referring probably to some dramatic scheme in which Sir Lumley Skeffington, an amateur playwright, had tried to engage Lamb's pen. He is in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, 597:

> And, sure, *great* Skeffington must claim our praise,
> For skirtless coats and skeletons of plays
> Renown'd alike, etc.

Lamb's share of the speaking pantomime for the Sheridans has vanished.

Charles Kent, in his Centenary Edition of Lamb's Works, printed a comic opera, said, on the authority of P. G. Patmore, to be Lamb's, and identified it with the experiment mentioned by Mary Lamb. But an examination of the manuscript, which is in the British Museum, convinces me that the writing is not Lamb's, while the matter has nothing characteristic in it. Tom Sheridan, by the way, was just a month younger than Lamb. Mr. Blunden, however, thinks that some of the names look like Lamb's writing.

Godwin's new book was his *Essay on Sepulchres*, published in 1809.

Noales was probably James Sheridan Knowles (1784–1862), the dramatist, a protégé of Hazlitt's father. We shall meet him again in the correspondence. After serving as a soldier and practising medicine he had gone on the stage. Several years later he became one of Lamb's friends.

The *Friend*, which probably had been in Coleridge's thoughts for some time, although announced to begin on the first Saturday in January 1809, did not begin until 1st June.]

213. JOINT LETTER OF MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

[P.M. (*10th*) *December 1808.*]

MY DEAR MRS. CLARKSON,

I feel myself greatly indebted to Mr. Clarkson for his care about our direction, since it has procured us the pleasure of a line from you. Why are we all, my dear friend, so unwilling to sit down and write a letter when we all so well know the great satisfaction it is to hear of the welfare of an absent friend? I began to think that you and all I connect in my mind with you

were gone from us for ever——Coleridge in a manner gave us up when he was in town, and we have now lost all traces of him. At the time he was in town I received two letters from Miss Wordsworth, which I never answered because I would not complain to her of our old friend. As this has never been explained to her it must seem very strange, more particularly so, as Miss Hutchinson & Mrs. Wordsworth were in an ill state of health at the time. Will you some day soon write a few words just to tell me how they all are and all you know concerning them?

Do not imagine that I am now *complaining* to you of Coleridge. Perhaps we are both in fault, we expect *too much*, and he gives *too little*. We ought many years ago to have understood each other better. Nor is it quite all over with us yet, for he will some day or other come in with the same old face, and receive (after a few spiteful words from me) the same warm welcome as ever. But we could not submit to sit as hearers at his lectures and not be permitted to see our old friend when *school-hours* were over. I beg you will not let what I have said give you a moment's thought, nor pray do not mention it to the Wordsworths nor to Coleridge, for I know he thinks I am apt to speak unkindly of him. I am not good tempered, and I have two or three times given him proofs that I am not. You say you are all in your 'better way,' which is a very chearful hearing, for I trust you mean to include that your health is *bettering* too. I look forward with great pleasure to the near approach of Christmas and Mr. Clarkson. And now the turkey you are so kind as to promise us comes into my head & tells me it is so very near that if writing before then should happen to be the least irksome to you, I will be content to wait for intelligence of our old friends till I have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Clarkson in town. I ought to say this because I know at times how dreadfully irksome writing a letter is to me, even when I have no reason in the world to give why it is so, and I remember I have heard you express something of the same kind of feelings.

I try to remember something to enquire after at Bury—The lady we visited, the cherry tree Tom and I robbed, Tom my partner in the robbery (Mr. Thomas C—— I suppose now), and your Cook maid that was so kind to me, are all at present I can recollect. Of all the places I ever saw Bury has made the liveliest

impression on my memory. I have a very indistinct recollection of the Lakes.

Charles joins with me in affectionate remembrances to you all, and he is more warm in his expressions of gratitude for the turkey because he is fonder of good eating than I am, though I am not amiss in that way.

God bless you my kind friends

I remain yours affectionately

M. LAMB.

Excuse this slovenly letter, if I were to write it over again I should abridge it one half.

II. CHARLES LAMB TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

We have this moment received a very chearful letter from Coleridge, who is now at Grasmere. It contains a prospectus for a new weekly publication to be called *The Friend*. He says they are well there, and in good spirits & that he has not been so well for a long time.

The Prospectus is of a weekly paper of a miscellaneous nature to be call'd the Friend & to come out, the first number, the first Saturday in January. Those who remember *The Watchman* will not be very sanguine in expecting a regular fulfillment of this Prophecy. But C. writes in delightful spirits, & *if ever*, he may *now* do this thing. I suppose he will send you a Prospectus. I had some thought of inclosing mine. But I want to shew it about. My kindest remembrᵉ to Mr. C. & thanks for the turkey.

C. LAMB.

[Coleridge, after delivering his lectures, had gone to Bury on a visit to the Clarksons. He then passed on to Grasmere, to Wordsworth's new house, Allan Bank, and settled down to project the *Friend*.

Tom Clarkson, with whom Mary Lamb robbed a cherry tree, became a metropolitan magistrate. He died in 1837.]

214. CHARLES LAMB TO GEORGE DAWE

[P.M. *21st January 1809.*]

DEAR D.,

I think that I should not find much entertainment in an Anatomical Lecture, therefore if you will excuse me, I will decline your kind offer of a ticket. It would not be convenient for me to go on Monday and I think that it would not amuse me any other night. Therefore I resign my interest in said Ticket or Tickets to some more scientific wight and am (as they say) equally obliged.

C. L.

P.S. When did you see Mrs. Godwin?
Saturday, I don't know what day of January '09.

[The only letter to George Dawe (1781–1829), the portrait-painter and engraver, who later in this year was made an A.R.A., and in 1814 an R.A. After Dawe's death Lamb wrote some amusing reminiscences of him for the *Englishman's Magazine*, September 1831.]

215. TO ROBERT LLOYD

Saturday, February 25, 1809.

DEAR ROBERT,

A great gap has been filled up since our intercourse was broken off. We shall at least have some things to talk over when we meet. That you should never have been in London since I saw you last is a fact which I cannot account for on the principles of my own mental formation. You are worthy to be mentioned with Claudian's 'Old Man of Verona.' I forbear to ask you any questions concerning your family: *who* are dead, and *who* married; I will not anticipate our meeting. I have been in total darkness respecting you all these years. I am just up; and have heard, without being able to confirm the fact, that Drury Lane Theatre is burnt to the ground. Of Walton's *Angler* a new edition is just published with the original plates revived. I think of buying it. The old editions are two guineas, and two guineas and a half. I have not forgotten our ride from Saffron Walden, and the

madness of young parson Thomson of Cambridge, that I took your brother to see. He is gone as a missionary to the East.

I live at present at No. 16 Mitre Court Buildings, Inner Temple. I shall move at Lady Day, or a little later: if you don't find me in M.C.B., I shall be at No. 2 *or* 4 Inner Temple Lane, at either of which places I shall be happy to shake my old friend Robert by the hand. C. L.

['Claudian's "Old Man."' 'De Sene Veronensi, qui suburbium nunquam egressus est.' Cowley, in his essay on the 'Dangers of an Honest Man in Much Company,' thus translates the words which Lamb was applying to Robert Lloyd:

> Happy the man, who his whole time doth bound
> Within th' inclosure of his little ground,

and so on.

The new edition of Walton was a reissue in 1808 of Sir John Hawkins's.

'Thomson.' Marmaduke Thompson.

On 1st March 1809 Manning wrote: 'My Dear Lamb, I've dined, & am ruined. My ideas are obtundated, fattened, oil'd, quenched, overlaid, stuffed, greased, spoil'd! I pop my head out of the grease tub of digestion & find every breeze of recollection blow rough upon me. God bless you. I am quite well, & firmly yours, while I am any thing. But at present I'm jaded, & dare not express the sentiments of my heart, for fear my sleepyness should wrong them.

'T. MANNING.

'P.S. Love to Mary. You *should* have sent your Tales from Shakespear.'

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Obtundere, to blunt, make dull; the dictionary word is "obtunded."' Mr. Vernon Rendall notes that Virgil's use of the word, 'Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora' (*Æneid* i. 567), was quoted in Parliament in defence of Congreve, as Johnson notes.

Lamb's part of the next letter shows us the first glimpse of his gift for pure nonsense, especially as employed for the use of children.]

216. JOINT LETTER OF MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO LOUISA MARTIN

[Dated at end: *28th March 1809*.]

DEAR LOUISA,

I promised never to let a letter of yours remain unanswered one week, if I have exceeded the time a few days you will not be

surprised when I tell you we have been removing from our dear old dirty chambers into lodgings, which has been great labour and pain and grief to me. I had persuaded myself that I should be glad to quit them, but when the time came you cannot imagine what I felt, when they were clean swept out and I was about to lock the door and leave them.

We are in Hazlitt's old lodgings and, I believe, must remain here at least two months before our new chambers are ready for us. Charles is now sitting by me writing to Manning. If you have any message to send him now is your time to speak. Poor Holcroft died last Thursday. Mrs. Reynolds is very ill. I am almost afraid she will never recover, her complaint seems to have fallen upon her lungs. Hazlitt has been in Town and is just gone back again. His child is expected to die.

We were pleased to see by your specimen of law hand that you have not quite forgotten old times, but we met with an instance yesterday of a still longer memory than yours. A Mr. Lloyd whom we have not seen since we lived at Islington dined with us; we had boiled pork and he waited some time with the meat on his plate till Emily brought up the mustard, and he confessed afterwards that he could not eat his dinner because the mustard was in a different mustard pot to what he had been used to see at Islington.

Poor Nurse about a week before we left the Temple fell down and hurt her hip. She is now in the Westminster Infirmary and is not expected ever to be able to walk again. I think I have nothing but dismal news to send you.

We left the carpet, the beautiful carpet Sarah and you so much admired and which I hear you make frequent inquiries after, in your letters to Hannah, we left it behind us with the deepest regret.

We have bought some very fine chairs and window curtains, and we intend almost to ruin ourselves in various other articles of expensive furniture—and we have hired a maid too. You will find strange alterations at your next holidays.

This is Wednesday, which I am very glad of, for it will make the place seem more like a home to me, at present I feel quite unsettled and unhomed.

II. Charles Lamb to Louisa Martin

Mary is suddenly snatched away (not by death) and has left her letter open, which I am tempted to fill up. Some odd things have occurred since you went away. Dawe the painter has painted a picture of the Princess Charlotte of Wales, which pleased the King so much that he knighted him. He is now Sir George Dawe. Mary has told you about Nurse. I was wishing her to die and how lucky things turn out!

Hazlitt's child died of swallowing a bag of white paint, which the poor little innocent thing mistook for sugar candy. It told its Mother just two hours before it died, that it did not like soft sugar candy, and so it came out, which was not before suspected. When it was opened several other things were found in it, particularly a small hearth brush, two golden pippins and a letter which I had written to Hazlitt from Bath. The letter had nothing remarkable in it. Martin Burney has displeased his family by marrying. You know the person, Miss Winter, that used to come for work to our house. It was there they contrived to meet. We suspected nothing.

My brother John said in a public coffee house the other day that his brother Charles (meaning me) had the best heart of anybody he knew. An eminent merchant (in consequence) took it up very warmly and promised his interest at the next election of Governors for Bartholomew Hospital to make me a Governor. Those institutions require humane people to have the Superintendence of them. Why don't you mind your spelling better? In your last letter you spelt finish, finnish, with two n s. When you arn't quite sure of a word write it at full length on three sorts of paper, or as many, as you think it may be spelt, ways, then throw them up the chimney, the smoke will carry them up, and watch on the outside till they come down, and that that's most smoked is the right way of spelling it. They always do so in Wales. But their chimneys are lower.

Your sister Hannah spoke 34750 words in twenty or twenty and one minutes last Saturday. There was a man with me who took them down; an amazing instance of the rapidity and volubility of some people's way of speaking.

III. Mary Lamb to Louisa Martin

He has only left room for me to say I hope it is true that you do not show your friends' nonsensical letters to your Governess.

I have not seen your Mother since the moving day, nor Hannah for several weeks. Sarah seems to succeed admirably.

Let us hear from you soon. Farewell,

I am,

Yours affectionately,

M. Lamb.

March 28th 1809.

[Hazlitt's child, so far from dying, lived on to be Mr. Registrar Hazlitt. Dawe was not knighted. Martin Burney did not marry.

Lamb's 'matter-of-lie' mood continues:]

217. Charles Lamb to Thomas Manning

29th March, 1809.

Dear Manning,

I sent you a long letter by the ships which sailed the beginning of last month, accompanied with books, &c. Since I last wrote, Holcroft is dead. He died on Thursday last and is not yet buried. He has been opened by Carlisle and his heart was found completely ossified. He has had a long and severe illness. He seemed very willing to live, and to the last acted on his favorite principle of the power of the will to overcome disease. I believe his strong faith in that power kept him alive long after another person would have given him up, and the physicians all concurred in positively saying he would not live a week, many weeks before he died. The family are as well as can be expected. I told you something about Mrs. Holcroft's plans. Since her death there has been a meeting of his friends and a subscription has been mentioned. I have no doubt that she will be set agoing, and that she will be fully competent to the scheme which she proposes. Fanny bears it much better than I could have supposed. So there is one of your friends whom you will never see again. Perhaps the next fleet may bring you a letter from Martin Burney,

to say that he writes by desire of Miss Lamb, who is not well enough to write herself, to inform you that her brother died on Thursday last, 14th June, &c. But I hope *not*. I should be sorry to give occasion to open a correspondence between Martin and you. This letter must be short, for I have driven it off to the very moment of doing up the packets; and besides, that which I refer to above is a very long one; and if you have received my books, you will have enough to do to read them. While I think on it, let me tell you we are moved. Don't come any more to Mitre Court Buildings. We are at 34, Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, and shall be here till about the end of May: then we remove to No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I mean to live and die; for I have such horror of moving, that I would not take a benefice from the King, if I was not indulged with non-residence. What a dislocation of comfort is comprised in that word moving! Such a heap of little nasty things, after you think all is got into the cart: old dredging-boxes, worn-out brushes, gallipots, vials, things that it is impossible the most necessitous person can ever want, but which the women, who preside on these occasions, will not leave behind if it was to save your soul; they'd keep the cart ten minutes to stow in dirty pipes and broken matches, to show their economy. Then you can find nothing you want for many days after you get into your new lodgings. You must comb your hair with your fingers, wash your hands without soap, go about in dirty gaiters. Was I Diogenes, I would not move out of a kilderkin into a hogshead, though the first had had nothing but small beer in it, and the second reeked claret. Our place of final destination,—I don't mean the grave, but No. 2 [4] Inner Temple Lane,—looks out upon a gloomy churchyard-like court, called Hare Court, with three trees and a pump in it. Do you know it? I was born near it, and used to drink at that pump when I was a Rechabite of six years old. If you see newspapers you will read about Mrs. Clarke. The sensation in London about this nonsensical business is marvellous. I remember nothing in my life like it. Thousands of ballads, caricatures, lives, of Mrs. Clarke, in every blind alley. Yet in the midst of this stir, a sublime abstracted dancing-master, who attends a family we know in Kensington, being asked a question about the progress of the examination in the House, inquired who

Mrs. Clarke was? He had heard nothing of it. He had evaded this omnipresence by utter insignificancy! The Duke should make that man his confidential valet. I proposed locking him up, barring him the use of his fiddle and red pumps, until he had minutely perused and committed to memory the whole body of the examinations, which employed the House of Commons a fortnight, to teach him to be more attentive to what concerns the public. I think I told you of Godwin's little book, and of Coleridge's prospectus, in my last; if I did not, remind me of it, and I will send you them, or an account of them, next fleet. I have no conveniency of doing it by this. Mrs. —— grows every day in disfavour with God and man. I will be buried with this inscription over me:—'Here lies C. L., the Woman-hater'—I mean that hated ONE WOMAN: for the rest, God bless them, and when he makes any more, make 'em prettier. How do you like the Mandarinesses? Are you on some little footing with any of them? This is Wednesday. On Wednesdays is my levee. The Captain, Martin, Phillips, (not the Sheriff,) Rickman, and some more, are constant attendants, besides stray visitors. We play at whist, eat cold meat and hot potatoes, and any gentleman that chooses smokes. Why do you never drop in? You'll come some day, won't you?

C. LAMB, &c.

[Thomas Holcroft died on 23rd March 1809, aged sixty-three.

16 Mitre Court Buildings, 27 and 34 Southampton Buildings, and 4 Inner Temple Lane (Lamb's homes) have all been rebuilt since Lamb's day. Where one can still (1934) be sure of being under the same roofs that once covered him is at Colebrook Cottage, Islington, the two Enfield houses, 'Lamb Cottage' at Edmonton, and No. 3 the Grove, Highgate, where he used to visit Coleridge. 20 Russell Street, Covent Garden, stands, but has been rebuilt.

'That word "moving."' Lamb later elaborated and condensed this passage, in the *Elia* essay 'New Year's Eve': 'Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household-gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood.'

'Mrs. Clarke.' Mary Anne Clarke (1776–1852), ex-mistress of the Duke of York, Commander-in-Chief, whose reception of money from officers as return for procuring them preferment or promising to, by her influence with the duke, had just been exposed in Parliament, and was causing immense excitement.

'Godwin's little book.' Probably the *Essay on Sepulchres*. But Godwin's Lives of Edward and John Phillips, Milton's nephews, appeared also at this time.

'Mrs. ——.' Most probably Mrs. Godwin once more.

'Not the Sheriff.' Alluding to Sir Richard Phillips, the publisher, who was elected Sheriff of London in 1807, and was knighted in 1808.

At Easter 1809, Robert Lloyd, now a Birmingham bookseller, visited London and wrote to his wife some enthusiastic letters with glimpses of Lamb in them. On the first night he supped with the Lambs at Godwin's. On the next night, a Wednesday, he was at Lamb's, with Rickman, Captain Burney, and George Dyer, supping on cold pork, cheese, and porter. 'Pipes were introduced.' Writing on the next day he says that Lamb was delighted with the *Walton* he gave him: probably the edition referred to on page 64. The letter of 3rd April 1809 says: 'I spent yesterday with Lamb and his sister—it is sweetly gratifying to see them. . . . If I may use the expression, their union of affection is what we conceive of marriage in Heaven. They are the World *one* to the *other*. They are writing a book of poetry for children together.' 'It is *task* work to them,' he says in another letter. 'They are writing for money, and a book of poetry for children being likely to do well has induced them to compose one.' On the next day Robert was again to enjoy Lamb's company, which he preferred to the opera. And in the last letter of the series he is to spend the evening again with Lamb, having dined the day before with James White.]

218. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated by H. C. R.: *May 1809*.]

DEAR SIR,

Would you be so kind as, when you go to the Times office, to see about an Advertisement which My Landlady's Daughter left for insertion about ten days since and has not appeared, for a Governesses Place? The references are to Thorpe & Graves 18 Lower Holborn, and to M. B. 115 Oxford St. Though not anxious about attitudes, she pines for a situation. I got home tolerably well, as I hear, the other evening. It may be a warning to any one in future to ask me to a dinner party. I always disgrace myself. I floated up stairs on the Coachman's back, like Ariel; 'On a bat's back I do fly, After sunset merrily.'

In sobriety
I am
Yours truly
C. LAMB.

[Lamb used the simile of Ariel at least twice afterwards: at the close of the *Elia* essay: 'Rejoicings on the New Year's Coming-of-Age,' and in a letter to Dr. Asbury of Enfield, to which we shall come in due course.]

219. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

[Probably *3rd June 1809*.]

'You may write to Hazlitt, that I will *certainly* go to Winterslough, as my Father has agreed to give me 5l. to bear my expences, and has given leave that I may stop till that is spent, leaving enough to defray my Carriage on the 14th July.'

So far Martin has written, and further than that I can give you no intelligence, for I do not yet know Phillips's intentions; nor can I tell you the exact time when we can come; nor can I positively say we shall come at all; for we have scruples of conscience about there being so many of us.

Martin says, if you can borrow a blanket or two, he can sleep on the floor, without either bed or mattress, which would save his expences at the Hut; for, if Phillips breakfasts there, he must do so too, which would swallow up all his money. And he and I have calculated that, if he has no Inn expences, he may as well spare that money to give you for a part of his roast beef.

We can spare you also just five pounds. You are not to say this to Hazlitt, lest his delicacy should be alarmed; but I tell you what Martin and I have planned, that, if you happen to be empty pursed at this time, you may think it as well to make him up a bed in the best kitchen.

I think it very probable that Phillips will come; and, if you do not like such a croud of us, for they both talk of staying a whole month, tell me so, and we will put off our visit till next summer.

The 14th July is the day Martin has fixed for *coming*. I should have written before, if I could have got a positive answer from them.

Thank you very much for the good work you have done for me. Mrs. Stoddart also thanks you for the gloves. How often must I tell you never to do any needle work for any body but me?

Martin Burney has been very ill, and still is very weak and pale. Mrs. Holcroft and all her children, and all her scholars, have had the measles. Your old friend, Mrs. Fenwick, is in town.

We are going to see Mrs. Martin and her daughter, Mrs.

Fulton (Sarah Martin), and I expect to see there the future husband of Louisa. It will be a charming evening, doubtless.

I cannot write any more, for we have got a noble Life of Lord Nelson lent us for a short time by my poor relation the book binder, and I want to read as much of it as I can.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

On reading Martin's note over again, we guess the Captain means him to stay only a fortnight. It is most likely we shall come the beginning of July.

Saturday.

[The Lambs were proposing to spend their holidays with the Hazlitts, in July, and to take Colonel Phillips and his nephew Martin Burney with them. (Or possibly it was the other Phillips.) As it happened, however, Mary Lamb was taken ill almost immediately after writing this letter, and the visit had to be postponed until September and October.

The Hut was the Winterslow inn.

'My poor relation the book binder.' See the letter to Barron Field, 4th October 1827. Identified by Major Butterworth as Charles Lovekin.

A copy of Lamb's *Works*, 1818, is in existence inscribed to 'Mr. C. Lovekin from his friend and cousin the Author.']

220. CHARLES LAMB TO S. T. COLERIDGE

June 7th, 1809.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I congratulate you on the appearance of 'The Friend.' Your first number promises well, and I have no doubt the succeeding numbers will fulfil the promise. I had a kind letter from you some time since, which I have left unanswered. I am also obliged to you, I believe, for a review in the 'Annual,' am I not? The 'Monthly Review' sneers at me, and asks 'if "Comus" is not *good enough* for Mr. Lamb?' because I have said no good serious dramas have been written since the death of Charles the First, except 'Samson Agonistes'; so because they do not know, or won't remember, that 'Comus' was written long before, I am to be set down as an undervaluer of Milton! O Coleridge, do

kill those reviews, or they will kill us—kill all we like! Be a friend to all else, but their foe. I have been turned out of my chambers in the Temple by a landlord who wanted them for himself; but I have got other at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, far more commodious and roomy. I have two rooms on third floor and five rooms above, with an inner staircase to myself, and all new painted, &c., and all for £30 a year! I came into them on Saturday week; and on Monday following, Mary was taken ill with fatigue of moving, and affected, I believe, by the novelty of the home; she could not sleep, and I am left alone with a maid quite a stranger to me, and she has a month or two's sad distraction to go through. What sad large pieces it cuts out of life —out of *her* life, who is getting rather old; and we may not have many years to live together! I am weaker, and bear it worse than I ever did. But I hope we shall be comfortable by and bye. The rooms are delicious, and the best look backwards into Hare Court, where there is a pump always going. Just now it is dry. Hare Court trees come in at the window, so that it's like living in a garden. I try to persuade myself it is much pleasanter than Mitre Court; but, alas! the household gods are slow to come in a new mansion. They are in their infancy to me; I do not feel them yet; no hearth has blazed to them yet. How I hate and dread new places!

I was very glad to see Wordsworth's book advertised; I am to have it to-morrow lent me, and if Wordsworth don't send me an order for one upon Longman, I will buy it. It is greatly extolled and liked by all who have seen it. Let me hear from some of you, for I am desolate. I shall have to send you, in a week or two, two volumes of Juvenile Poetry, done by Mary and me within the last six months, and that tale in prose which Wordsworth so much liked, which was published at Christmas, with nine others, by us, and has reached a second edition. There's for you! We have almost worked ourselves out of child's work, and I don't know what to do. Sometimes I think of a drama, but I have no head for play-making; I can do the dialogue, and that's all. I am quite aground for a plan, and I must do something for money. Not that I have immediate wants, but I have prospective ones. O money, money, how blindly thou hast been worshipped, and how stupidly abused! Thou art health, and

liberty, and strength; and he that has thee may rattle his pockets at the foul fiend!

Nevertheless, do not understand by this that I have not quite enough for my occasions for a year or two to come. While I think on it, Coleridge, I fetch'd away my books which you had at the 'Courier' Office, and found all but a third volume of the old plays, containing 'The White Devil,' 'Green's Tu Quoque,' and the 'Honest Whore,'—perhaps the most valuable volume of them all—*that* I could not find. Pray, if you can, remember what you did with it, or where you took it out with you a walking perhaps; send me word; for, to use the old plea, it spoils a set. I found two other volumes (you had three), the 'Arcadia,' and 'Daniel,' enriched with manuscript notes. I wish every book I have were so noted. They have thoroughly converted me to relish Daniel, or to say I relish him, for, after all, I believe I did relish him. You well call him sober-minded. Your notes are excellent. Perhaps you've forgot them. I have read a review in the 'Quarterly,' by Southey, on the Missionaries, which is most masterly. I only grudge it being there. It is quite beautiful. Do remember my Dodsley; and pray do write, or let some of you write. Clarkson tells me you are in a smoky house. Have you cured it? It is hard to cure anything of smoking. Our little poems are but humble, but they have no name. You must read them, remembering they were task-work; and perhaps you will admire the number of subjects, all of children, picked out by an old Bachelor and an old Maid. Many parents would not have found so many. Have you read 'Cœlebs?' It has reached eight editions in so many weeks; yet literally it is one of the very poorest sort of common novels, with the draw-back of dull religion in it. Had the religion been high and flavoured, it would have been something. I borrowed this 'Cœlebs in Search of a Wife' of a very careful, neat lady, and returned it with this stuff written in the beginning:—

> If ever I marry a wife
> I'll marry a landlord's daughter,
> For then I may sit in the bar,
> And drink cold brandy-and-water.

I don't expect you can find time from your 'Friend' to write to me much, but write something, for there has been a long

silence. You know Holcroft is dead. Godwin is well. He has written a very pretty, absurd book about sepulchres. He was affronted because I told him it was better than Hervey, but not so good as Sir T. Browne. This letter is all about books; but my head aches, and I hardly know what I write; but I could not let 'The Friend' pass without a congratulatory epistle. I won't criticise till it comes to a volume. Tell me how I shall send my packet to you?—by what conveyance?—by Longman, Short-man, or how? Give my kindest remembrances to Wordsworth. Tell him he must give me a book. My kind love to Mrs. W. and to Dorothy separately and conjointly. I wish you could all come and see me in my new rooms. God bless you all. C. L.

[The first number of the *Friend* was dated 1st June 1809.

Lamb's *Dramatic Specimens* had been reviewed in the *Annual Review* for 1808, with discrimination and approval (see vol. iv of my large edition), but whether or not by Coleridge I do not know.

Wordsworth's book was his pamphlet on the Convention of Cintra.

The Juvenile Poetry was *Poetry for Children. Entirely Original.* By the author of *Mrs. Leicester's School.* In two volumes, 1809. *Mrs. Leicester's School,* 1809, had been published a little before. Wordsworth's favourite tale was Arabella Hardy's *The Sea Voyage.*

I know nothing of the annotated copy of Sidney's *Arcadia.* Daniel's *Poetical Works,* 12mo, 1718, two volumes, with marginalia by Lamb and Coleridge, is still preserved. The copy of Hannah More's *Cælebs in Search of a Wife,* 1809, with Lamb's verses, is not, I think, now known. I have changed the word 'staff,' as printed in most editions, to 'stuff,' but Lamb may have written 'staff,' a stave.

Southey's missionary article was in the first number of the *Quarterly,* February 1809.

Hervey wrote *Meditations among the Tombs*; Sir Thomas Browne, *Urn Burial.*]

221. TO CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

[Dated at end: *13th June 1809.*]

DEAR SIR,

I received with great pleasure the mark of your remembrance which you were pleased to send me, the Translation from Homer. You desire my opinion of it. I think it is plainer and more to the purpose than Pope's, though it may want some of his Splendour and some of his Sound. Yet I do not remember in

any part of his translation a series of more manly versification than the conference of Priam with Hermes in your translation (Lines 499 to 530), or than that part of the reply of Achilles to Priam, beginning with the fable of the Two Urns (in page 24); or than the Story of Niobe which follows a little after. I do not retain enough of my Greek (to my shame I say it) to venture at an opinion of the correctness of your version. What I seem to miss, and what certainly everybody misses in Pope, is a certain savage-like plainness of speaking in Achilles—a sort of indelicacy —the heroes in Homer are not half civilised, they utter all the cruel, all the selfish, all the *mean thoughts* even of their nature, which it is the fashion of our great men to keep in. I cannot, in lack of Greek, point to any one place—but I remember the general feature as I read him at school. But your principles and turn of mind would, I have no doubt, lead you to *civilize* his phrases, and sometimes to *half christen* them.

I have marked a few verbal slips, the doing of which cannot be called criticism, or it is as if a Reviewer being taken ill, his printer's Compositor or Reader were called to supply his place.

I am sure I ought to make many apologies for the freedom I have taken, but it will at least convince you that I have read the Book —which I have twice, and the last time with more pleasure, because more at leisure. I wish you Joy of an Amusement which I somehow seem to have done with. Excepting some Things for Children, I have scarce chimed ten couplets in the last as many years. Be pleased to give my most kind remembrances to Mrs. Lloyd; and please to tell Robert that my Sister is getting well, and I hope will soon be able to take pleasure in his affectionate Epistle. My Love also to Charles, when you write.

I am, Sir, with the greatest [*the last few words, including signature, have been cut away.*]

13 June, 09, Temple

Robert will have told you how pleased I was with your truly Horatian Epistle in the 'Gent. Mag.'

[The passage which Lamb particularly liked, the conference of Priam and Hermes, ran thus:

> The old man answer'd—'If thou truly art
> Of fierce Achilles' family a part,
> Tell me, oh tell, if noble Hector lies

Still in the tent, depriv'd of obsequies;
Or has Achilles in an evil hour,
Thrown him to dogs in piece-meal to devour?'
The swift-wing'd messenger replied and said,
'Neither the vultures nor the dogs have made
A prey of Hector's corpse, which lies yet sound
Within the tent, neglected on the ground.
Twelve mornings now are past since he was slain,
But still the skin its freshness doth retain;
The worms, which make of warriors dead a prey,
From this dead body have been kept away:
Our chief, when morning brightens up the skies,
The noble Hector to his chariot ties,
And drags him round his dear Patroclus' tomb;
But still the dead retains his youthful bloom:
The blood all wash'd away, no stains appear,
The numerous wounds are clos'd, the skin is clear;
Thus round thy son, the care of heaven is spread,
It lov'd him living, and it guards him dead.'
These words reviv'd the aged king, who said,
''Tis right that sacrifice and gifts be paid
To the immortals, and the pious mind
Of noble Hector ever was inclin'd
To honour them, while here he drew his breath:
And hence have they remember'd him in death.
Accept for all the kindness thou hast shown,
This golden cup, and keep it as thine own,
And if it please thee, with the gods' consent,
Conduct me safely to Achilles' tent.'

Many of Lamb's suggestions are too slight to be given here, but some must be reproduced.

'Lines 243, 244, 245 are the flattest lines in the whole:

But now *be open*, and *declare thy mind*,
For I *confess I feel myself inclin'd*,
Indeed impell'd by Jove's command to go,
And face the man the cause of all our woe—[1]

is the cool language of a Man and his Wife upon ordinary occurrences over a peaceable fireside—not the waverings of a divinely-impelled, humanly-shrinking, Priam striving to bolster up his own half-doubting inspirations by infusing a courage which he does not feel into the aged partner of his throne,

[1] *Iliad* xxiv. 197–9:

ἀλλ' ἄγε μοι τόδε εἰπέ, τί τοι φρεσὶν εἴδεται εἶναι;
αἶνῶς γάρ μ' αὐτόν γε μένος καὶ θυμὸς ἀνώγει
κεῖσ' ἰέναι ἐπὶ νῆας ἔσω στρατὸν εὐρὺν Ἀχαιῶν.

that she may give it back to him. I should not have exprest myself thus petulantly, if there were many more, or indeed any more such Lines in the Translation, but they stopt the current of my feeling in the place, and I hope you will pardon my expressions.'

Concerning *παιδοφόνοιο* in the line (506)

ἀνδρὸς παιδοφόνοιο ποτὶ στόμα χεῖρ' ὀρέγεσθαι.

Lamb wrote: 'I don't know Homer's word, not having my books about me, but surely in English, Priam would have said the *Slayer* of my *Son*, not call'd Achilles *murderer*, at such a time. That is rather too plain for the homely-speaking Homeric Heroes.'

Again, Mr. Lloyd had translated *τύμβον* in the line (666)

ἐνδεκάτῃ δέ κε τύμβον ἐπ' αὐτῷ ποιήσαιμεν,

and *σῆμα* in lines 799 and 801, 'tumulus.' Lamb objected: 'Tumulus is too much like *making Homer talk Latin*. Tumulus is always spoken by an English mouth with a consciousness of *scientific attainment*. Priam and his People were no scholars—plain downright fighting men.'

And of Mr. Lloyd's use of the word 'minstrels' for Homer's *ἀοιδούς* (singers), in the line (720)

τρητοῖς ἐν λεχέεσσι θέσαν, παρὰ δ' εἶσαν ἀοιδούς,

his critic said: 'Minstrels, I suspect to be a word bringing merely English or English ballad feelings to the Mind. It expresses the thing and something more, as to say Sarpedon was a Gentleman, or as somebody translated Paul's address, "Ye men of Athens," "Gentlemen of Athens."'

The 'truly Horatian Epistle' was a translation of the first Epistle of the First Book, 'To Mæcenas,' which Mr. Lloyd had contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1809.

These criticisms having brought forth a reply from the criticized, and a request for further advice, Lamb wrote again:]

222. TO CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

[Dated at end: *19th June 1809*.]

DEAR SIR,

I can only say that I shall be most happy to see anything that you can send me at any time that has reference to your newly taken up pursuits. I will faithfully return the Manuscript with such observations as a mere acquaintance with English, and with English Poetry, may suggest. I dare not dictate in Greek. I am *Homo unius linguæ*—your vindication of the Lines which I had objected to makes me ashamed of the unimportance of my

remarks: they were not worth confuting. Only on Line 33, Page 4, I still retain my opinion that it should be 'were made.'

> All seem'd to wish that such attempt were made,
> Save Juno, Neptune, and the blue-ey'd maid.

I am glad to see you venture *made* and *maid* for rhymes. 'Tis true their sound is the same. But the mind occupied in revolving the different meaning of two words so literally the same, is diverted from the objection which the mere Ear would make, and to the mind it is rhyme enough. I had not noticed it till this moment of transcribing the couplet. A timidity of Rhyming, whether of bringing together sounds too near, or too remote to each other, is a fault of the present day. The old English poets were richer in their diction, as they were less scrupulous. I shall expect your MS. with curiosity.

I am, Sir,

Yours with great respect,

C. LAMB.

My kind remembrances to Robert. I shall soon have a little parcel to send him. I am very sorry to hear of the ill-health of Sophia.

['Were made.' Mr. Lloyd had written 'be made.']

223. TO ROBERT LLOYD

July, 1809.

DEAR ROBERT,

Make my apologies to your father for not returning his 'Odyssey' sooner, but I lent it to a friend who is a better Grecian than me, to make remarks on, and he has been so busied (he is a Doctor of Laws) that I have rescued the MSS. from him at last by force. He has written a few observations. I send you our poems. All mine are marked √ in the contents. The rest are Mary's, all but the 'Beggar Man,' which is my brother's. The farce is not at home, but you shall have it ere long.—What follows is for your Father to see.—Mary desires her remembrances.

[The friend was probably John Stoddart.]

224. TO CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

July 1809.

DEAR SIR,

A friend who has kept your M.S. unreasonably long has ventured a few remarks on the first Book. And I have twice read thro' both with care, and can only reprehend a few trifling expressions with my scanty knowledge of Greek. I thank you for the reading of them, and assure you they read to me beautifully simple and in the manner of the original as far as I understand it.

Yours truly,

C. L.

My kind respects to Mrs. Lloyd.

[A few of Lamb's emendations follow, most of which Mr. Lloyd adopted when he came to print.

Mr. Lloyd at first had rendered (Book i, line 8) *βοῦς Ἠελίοιο* 'Bullocks of the Sun.' Thus Lamb: 'OXEN of the Sun, I conjure. Bullocks is too Smithfield and sublunary a Word. Oxen of the Sun, or of Apollo, but in any case not Bullocks.' Again, Mr. Lloyd had written (Book i, line 69):

The Cyclops' Eye still rankles in his breast.

Lamb remarked: '"The Cyclops' Eye still rankles in his Breast." Here is an unlucky confusion of literal with figurative language. One Man's *Eye* rankles in another *Breast*. "Cyclops' wrongs" would do better.'

For Homer's *δαιτρὸς* and *κῆρυξ* (Book i, lines 141, 143) Mr. Lloyd offered Cook and Butler. 'These sound,' said Lamb, 'too modern-kitchenish. One might be called an officer or servitor, the other a sewer. Milton speaks of these things as the office mean "of sewer and seneschall." Perhaps sewer is too old. But Cook and Butler are too like modern Establishments.']

225. TO CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

July 31, 1809.

DEAR SIR,

The general impression made by your Translation on the mind of my friend who kept your MS. so unreasonably long, as well as on another friend who read over a good part of it with me, was that it gave a great deal more of the sense of Homer than either of his two great modern Translators have done. In several expressions which they at first objected to, on turning to the

Greek they found it completely warranted you in the use of them; and they were even surprised that you could combine so much fidelity with so much of the turn of the best modern improvements in the Couplet versification. I think of the two, I rather prefer the Book of the Iliad which you sent me, for the sound of the verse; but the difference of subject almost involuntarily modifies verse. I find Cowper is a favourite with nobody. His injudicious use of the stately slow Miltonic verse in a subject so very different, has given a distaste. Nothing can be more unlike to my fancy than Homer and Milton. Homer is perfect prattle, tho' exquisite prattle, compared to the deep oracular voice of Milton. In Milton you love to stop, and saturate your mind with every great image or sentiment; in Homer you want to go on, to have more of his agreeable narrative. Cowper delays you as much, walking over a Bowling Green, as the other does, travelling over steep Alpine heights, where the labour enters into and makes a part of the pleasure. From what I have seen, I would certainly be glad to hear that you continued your employment quite through the Poem: that is, for an agreeable and honourable recreation to yourself; though I should scarce think that (Pope having got the ground) a translation in Pope's Couplet versification would ever supersede his to the public, however faithfuller or in some respects better. Pitt's Virgil is not much read, I believe, though nearer to the Original than Dryden's. Perhaps it is, that people do not like two Homers or Virgils—there is a sort of confusion in it to an English reader, who has not a centre of reference in the Original: when Tate and Brady's Psalms came out in our Churches, many pious people would not substitute them in the room of David's, as they call'd Sternhold and Hopkins's. But if you write for a relaxation from other sort of occupations I can only congratulate you, Sir, on the noble choice, as it seems to me, which you have made, and express my wonder at the facility which you suddenly have arrived at, if (as I suspect) these are indeed the first specimens of this sort which you have produced. But I cannot help thinking that you betray a more practised gait than a late beginner could so soon acquire. Perhaps you have only resumed what you had formerly laid aside as interrupting more necessary avocations.

I need not add how happy I shall be to see at any time what you

may please to send me. In particular, I should be glad to see that you had taken up Horace, which I think you enter into as much as any man that was not born in his days, and in the *Via Longa* or *Flaminia,* or near the *Forum.*

With many apologies for keeping your MS. so long, which my friend's engagements in business must excuse,—I remain, Dear Sir, yours truly, C. L.

My kind respects to Mrs. Ll., and my remembrances to Robert, etc. etc.

['Via Flaminia.' The great north road from Rome, lined with monuments to the dead.]

226. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Monday, 30th October 1809.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

I have but this moment received your letter dated the 9th inst., having just come off a journey from Wiltshire, where I have been with Mary on a visit to Hazlitt. The journey has been of infinite service to her. We have had nothing but sunshiny days and daily walks from eight to twenty miles a-day; have seen Wilton, Salisbury, Stonehenge, &c. Her illness lasted but six weeks; it left her weak, but the country has made us whole. We came back to our Hogarth Room—I have made several acquisitions since you saw them,—and found Nos. 8, 9, 10 of 'The Friend.' The account of Luther in the Warteburg is as fine as anything I ever read. God forbid that a man who has such things to say should be silenced for want of £100. This Custom-and-Duty Age would have made the Preacher on the Mount take out a licence, and St. Paul's Epistles would not have been missible without a stamp. Oh, that you may find means to go on! But alas! where is Sir G. Beaumont?—Sotheby? What is become of the rich Auditors in Albemarle Street? Your letter has saddened me.

I am so tired with my journey, being up all night, I have neither things nor words in my power. I believe I expressed my admiration of the Pamphlet. Its power over me was like that which

Milton's pamphlets must have had on his contemporaries, who were tuned to them. What a piece of prose! Do you hear if it is read at all? I am out of the world of readers. I hate all that do read, for they read nothing but reviews and new books. I gather myself up unto the old things.

I have put up shelves. You never saw a book-case in more true harmony with the contents, than what I've nailed up in a room, which, though new, has more aptitudes for growing old than you shall often see—as one sometimes gets a friend in the middle of life, who becomes an old friend in a short time. My rooms are luxurious; one is for prints and one for Books; a Summer and a Winter parlour. When shall I ever see you in them? C. L.

My head is sore, I write I know not what. It always is after [*the end of the sheet is torn off.*]

[Hazlitt has given some account of the Lambs' visit to Winterslow, but the passage belongs probably to the year following. In his essay 'On the Conversation of Authors' he likens Lamb in the country to 'the most capricious poet Ovid among the Goths.' 'The country people thought him an oddity, and did not understand his jokes. It would be strange if they had, for he did not make any, while he stayed. But when he crossed the country to Oxford, then he spoke a little. He and the old colleges were hail-fellow well met; and in the quadrangles he "walked gowned."' Again, in 'A Farewell to Essay-writing,' Hazlitt says: 'I used to walk out at this time with Mr. and Miss Lamb of an evening, to look at the Claude Lorraine skies over our heads melting from azure into purple and gold, and to gather mushrooms, that sprang up at our feet, to throw into our hashed mutton.'

Lamb's Hogarths were framed in black. It must have been about this time that he began his essay 'On the Genius of Hogarth,' which was printed in the *Reflector* in 1811 (see vol. i of my edition).

The *Friend* lasted until No. XXVII, 15th March 1810. The account of Luther was in No. VIII, 5th October 1809. Coleridge had not been supported financially as he had hoped, and had already begun to think of stopping the paper.

Sir George Howland Beaumont (1753–1827), of Coleorton, the friend and patron of men of genius, had helped, with Sotheby, in the establishment of the *Friend*, and was instrumental subsequently in procuring a pension for Coleridge. William Sotheby (1757–1833), the translator and author, had received subscriptions for Coleridge's lectures.

'The rich Auditors in Albemarle Street.' Those who had listened to Coleridge's lectures at the Royal Institution.

'The Pamphlet.' Presumably Wordsworth's on the Convention of Cintra.

'You never saw a book-case.' Leigh Hunt wrote of Lamb's books in the essay 'My Books,' in the *Literary Examiner*:

> It looks like what it is, a selection made at precious intervals from the book-stalls;—now a Chaucer at nine and twopence; now a Montaigne or a Sir Thomas Browne at two shillings; now a Jeremy Taylor, a Spinoza; an old English Dramatist, Prior, and Sir Philip Sidney; and the books are 'neat as imported.' The very perusal of the backs is a 'discipline of humanity.' There Mr. Southey takes his place again with an old Radical friend: there Jeremy Collier is at peace with Dryden: there the lion, Martin Luther, lies down with the Quaker lamb, Sewel: there Guzman d'Alfarache thinks himself fit company for Sir Charles Grandison, and has his claims admitted. Even the 'high fantastical' Duchess of Newcastle, with her laurel on her head, is received with grave honours, and not the less for declining to trouble herself with the constitutions of her maids.]

227. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

November 7th, 1809.

MY DEAR SARAH,

The dear, quiet, lazy, delicious month we spent with you is remembered by me with such regret, that I feel quite discontent & Winterslow-sick. I assure you, I never passed such a pleasant time in the country in my life, both in the house & out of it, the card playing quarrels, and a few gaspings for breath after your swift footsteps up the high hills excepted, and those drawbacks are not unpleasant in the recollection. We have got some salt butter to make our toast seem like yours, and we have tried to eat meat suppers, but that would not do, for we left our appetites behind us; and the dry loaf, which offended you, now comes in at night unaccompanied; but, sorry am I to add, it is soon followed by the pipe and the gin bottle. We smoked the very first night of our arrival.

Great news! I have just been interrupted by Mr. Daw, who comes to tell me he was yesterday elected a Royal Academician. He said none of his own friends voted for him; he got it by strangers, who were pleased with his picture of Mrs. White. Charles says he does not believe Northcote ever voted for the admission of any one. Though a very cold day, Daw was in a prodigious sweat, for joy at his good fortune.

More great news! my beautiful green curtains were put up yesterday, and all the doors listed with green baize, and four new boards put to the coal-hole, and fastening hasps put to the window, and my died Manning silk cut out.

Yesterday was an eventful day: for yesterday too Martin Burney was to be examined by Lord Eldon, previous to his being admitted as an Attorney; but he has not yet been here to announce his success.

I carried the baby-caps to Mrs. [John] Hazlitt; she was much pleased, and vastly thankful. Mr. [John] H. got fifty-four guineas at Rochester, and has now several pictures in hand.

I am going to tell you a secret, for —— says she would be sorry to have it talked of. One night —— came home from the ale-house, bringing with him a great, rough, ill-looking fellow, whom he introduced to —— as Mr. Brown, a gentleman he had hired as a mad keeper, to take care of him, at forty pounds a year, being ten pounds under the usual price for keepers, which sum Mr. Brown had agreed to remit out of pure friendship. It was with great difficulty, and by threatening to call in the aid of watchmen and constables, that —— could prevail on Mr. Brown to leave the house.

We had a good chearful meeting on Wednesday: much talk of Winterslow, its woods & its nice sun flowers. I did not so much like Phillips at Winterslow, as I now like him for having been with us at Winterslow. We roasted the last of his 'beach, of oily nut prolific,' on Friday, at the Captain's. Nurse is now established in Paradise, *alias* the Incurable Ward [of Westminster Hospital]. I have seen her sitting in most superb state, surrounded by her seven incurable companions. They call each other ladies. Nurse looks as if she would be considered as the first lady in the ward: only one seemed at [all] like to rival her in dignity.

A man in the India House has resigned, by which Charles will get twenty pounds a year; and White has prevailed on him to write some more lottery-puffs. If that ends in smoke, the twenty pounds is a sure card, and has made us very joyful.

I continue very well, & return you very sincere thanks for my good health, and improved looks which have almost made Mrs. Godwin die with envy; she longs to come to Winterslow as much

as the spiteful elder sister did to go to the well for a gift to spit diamonds—

Jane and I have agreed to boil a round of beef for your suppers, when you come to town again. She, Jane, broke two of the Hogarth glasses while we were away—whereat I made a great noise.

Farewel. Love to William, and Charles's love and good wishes for the speedy arrival of the Life of Holcroft, & the bearer thereof.

Yours most affectionately,

Tuesday. M. LAMB.

Charles told Mrs. Godwin, Hazlitt had found a well in his garden, which, water being scarce in your country, would bring him in two hundred a year; and she came in great haste the next morning to ask me if it were true. Your brother and his &c. are quite well.

[George Dawe had just been elected not Royal Academician but Associate. He became full R.A. in 1814.

Mrs. White was the wife of Anthony White, the surgeon, who had been apprenticed to Sir Anthony Carlisle.

Northcote was James Northcote, R.A., whose *Conversations* Hazlitt recorded some years later.

Martin Burney never made a successful lawyer. His life was destined to be unhappy and unprofitable, as we shall see later.

'I am going to tell you a secret.' In the absence of the original these blanks cannot be filled in, nor are they important.

'Beach [beech] of oily nuts prolific' is Cowper's phrase in *The Sofa*.

Mrs. Anderson's notes on 'Nurse': 'In answer to a letter of inquiry to the Westminster Hospital, Major Butterworth was informed that an entry in the Minutes, under date 11th October 1809, runs as follows: "In pursuance of an order of the Weekly Board of the 13th September last the Physicians and Surgeons did on the 20th September represent:

Sarah Jameson.	.	aged 60 years
Mary Grant .	.	aged 69 years
Hannah Davis.	.	aged ? years

in order that two of them may be admitted upon the Incurable Establishment. Ordered: That Sarah Jameson and Mary Grant be put upon the said Establishment."

'Mary Grant is first mentioned by Mary in a P.S. to Sarah Stoddart, July 1804: "Good wishes . . . from old nurse." Possibly she came sometimes to "oblige" when Mary was ill, because in his letter to Manning, in June 1804, Lamb says "Nurse, don't call me unless Mr. Manning comes."'

'A man in the India House has resigned.' Mrs. Anderson's note: 'I think this was probably W. Marter. I have the list of clerks (thirty-five) in the

Accountant General's Office in 1808; W. M. was three above Lamb in seniority, and his is the only name *above* Lamb's not appearing in the 1810 list. He and Wm. Evans were transferred to the Baggage Warehouse, and Marter retired altogether in 1812.'

'Lottery puffs.' See note on p. 412, vol. i.

'The spiteful elder sister.' This story is in Perrault, and the edition in which Mary Lamb read it was probably that published in 1802 by B. C. Collins, *Histories or Tales of Past Times, Told by Mother Goose*, written in English by G. M. Gent. It will be found under the title 'Toads and Diamonds' in Andrew Lang's *Blue Fairy Book*.

'The *Life of Holcroft*.' The *Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft*, begun by Holcroft, and finished by Hazlitt, although completed in 1810, were not published until 1816.]

228. CHARLES LAMB TO ROBERT LLOYD

DEAR ROBERT, *January 1, 1810.*

In great haste I write. The Turkey is down at the fire, and some pleasant friends are come in to partake of it. The Sender's Health shall not be forgot. What you tell me of your Father's perseverance in his honourable task gives me great pleasure. Seven Books are a serious earnest of the whole, which I hope to see finish'd.

We had a delightful month in Wiltshire, four weeks of uniform fine weather, the only fine days which had been all the summer. Saw Salisbury Cathedral, Stonehenge, Wilton, etc. etc. Mary is in excellent health, and sends her Love. Accept of mine, with my kind respects to Mrs. Ll—— and to your father and mother.

Coleridge's *Friend* is occasionally sublime. What do you think of that Description of Luther in his Study in one of the earlier numbers? The worst is, he is always promising something which never comes; it is now 18th Number, and continues introductory; the 17th (that stupid long letter) was nothing better than a Prospectus, and ought to have preceded the 1st Number. But I rejoice that it lives.

When you come to London, you will find us at No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, with a few old Books, a few old Hogarths round the room, and the Household Gods at last establish'd. The feeling of Home, which has been slow to come, has come at last. May I never move again, but may my next Lodging be my Coffin.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

229. TO THOMAS MANNING

Jan. 2nd, 1810.

Mary sends her love.

DEAR MANNING,

When I last wrote to you, I was in lodgings. I am now in chambers, No. 4, Inner Temple Lane, where I should be happy to see you any evening. Bring any of your friends, the Mandarins, with you. I have two sitting-rooms: I call them so *par excellence*, for you may stand, or loll, or lean, or try any posture in them; but they are best for sitting; not squatting down Japanese fashion, but the more decorous use of the posteriors which European usage has consecrated. I have two of these rooms on the third floor, and five sleeping, cooking, &c., rooms, on the fourth floor. In my best room is a choice collection of the works of Hogarth, an English painter of some humour. In my next best are shelves containing a small but well-chosen library. My best room commands a court, in which there are trees and a pump, the water of which is excellent—cold with brandy, and not very insipid without. Here I hope to set up my rest, and not quit till Mr. Powell, the undertaker, gives me notice that I may have possession of my last lodging. He lets lodgings for single gentlemen. I sent you a parcel of books by my last, to give you some idea of the state of European literature. There comes with this two volumes, done up as letters, of minor poetry, a sequel to 'Mrs. Leicester'; the best you may suppose mine; the next best are my coadjutor's; you may amuse yourself in guessing them out; but I must tell you mine are but one-third in quantity of the whole. So much for a very delicate subject. It is hard to speak of one's self, &c. Holcroft had finished his life when I wrote to you, and Hazlitt has since finished his life—I do not mean his own life, but he has finished a life of Holcroft, which is going to press. Tuthill is Dr. Tuthill. I continue Mr. Lamb. I have published a little book for children on titles of honour: and to give them some idea of the difference of rank and gradual rising, I have made a little scale, supposing myself to receive the following various accessions of dignity from the king, who is the fountain of honour—As at first, 1, Mr. C. Lamb; 2, C. Lamb,

Esq.; 3, Sir C. Lamb, Bart.; 4, Baron Lamb of Stamford;[1] 5, Viscount Lamb; 6, Earl Lamb; 7, Marquis Lamb; 8, Duke Lamb. It would look like quibbling to carry it on further, and especially as it is not necessary for children to go beyond the ordinary titles of sub-regal dignity in our own country, otherwise I have sometimes in my dreams imagined myself still advancing, as 9th, King Lamb; 10th, Emperor Lamb; 11th, Pope Innocent, higher than which is nothing but the Lamb of God. Puns I have not made many (nor punch much), since the date of my last; one I cannot help relating. A constable in Salisbury Cathedral was telling me that eight people dined at the top of the spire of the cathedral; upon which I remarked, that they must be very sharp-set. But in general I cultivate the reasoning part of my mind more than the imaginative. Do you know Kate *********? I am stuffed out so with eating turkey for dinner, and another turkey for supper yesterday (turkey in Europe and turkey in Asia), that I can't jog on. It is New-Year here. That is, it was New-Year half a-year back, when I was writing this. Nothing puzzles me more than time and space, and yet nothing puzzles me less, for I never think about them. Miss Knap is turned midwife. Never having had a child herself, she can't draw any wrong analogies from her own case. Dr. Stoddart has had Twins. There was five shillings to pay the Nurse. Mrs. Godwin was impannelled on a jury of Matrons last Sessions. She saved a criminal's life by giving it as her opinion that ————. The Judge listened to her with the greatest deference. The Persian ambassador is the principal thing talked of now. I sent some people to see him worship the sun on Primrose Hill at half past six in the morning, 28th November; but he did not come, which makes me think the old fire-worshippers are a sect almost extinct in Persia. Have you trampled on the Cross yet? The Persian ambassador's name is Shaw Ali Mirza. The common people call him Shaw Nonsense. While I think of it, I have put three letters besides my own three into the India post for you, from your brother, sister, and some gentleman whose name I forget. Will they, have they, did they, come safe? The distance you are at, cuts up tenses by the root. I think you said you did not know

[1] Where my family come from. I have chosen that if ever I should have my choice.

Kate *********. I express her by nine stars, though she is but one, but if ever one star differed from another in glory ——. You must have seen her at her father's. Try and remember her. Coleridge is bringing out a paper in weekly numbers, called the 'Friend,' which I would send, if I could; but the difficulty I had in getting the packets of books out to you before deters me; and you'll want something new to read when you come home. It is chiefly intended to puff off Wordsworth's poetry; but there are some noble things in it by the by. Except Kate, I have had no vision of excellence this year, and she passed by like the queen on her coronation day; you don't know whether you saw her or not. Kate is fifteen: I go about moping, and sing the old pathetic ballad I used to like in my youth—

> She's sweet Fifteen,
> I'm *one year more.*

Mrs. Bland sung it in boy's clothes the first time I heard it. I sometimes think the lower notes in my voice are like Mrs. Bland's. That glorious singer Braham, one of my lights, is fled. He was for a season. He was a rare composition of the Jew, the gentleman, and the angel, yet all these elements mixed up so kindly in him, that you could not tell which predominated; but he is gone, and one Phillips is engaged instead. Kate is vanished, but Miss B****** is always to be met with!

> Queens drop away, while blue-legg'd Maukin thrives;
> And courtly Mildred dies while country Madge survives.

That is not my poetry, but Quarles's; but haven't you observed that the rarest things are the least obvious? Don't show anybody the names in this letter. I write confidentially, and wish this letter to be considered as *private.* Hazlitt has written a *grammar* for Godwin; Godwin sells it bound up with a treatise of his own on language, but the *grey mare is the better horse.* I don't allude to Mrs. Godwin, but to the word *grammar,* which comes near to *grey mare,* if you observe, in sound. That figure is called paranomasia in Greek. I am sometimes happy in it. An old woman begged of me for charity. 'Ah! sir,' said she, 'I have seen better days;' 'So have I, good woman,' I replied; but I meant literally, days not so rainy and overcast as that on which she begged: she meant more prosperous days. Mr. Dawe is made associate of

the Royal Academy. By what law of association I can't guess. Mrs. Holcroft, Miss Holcroft, Mr. and Mrs. Godwin, Mr. and Mrs. Hazlitt, Mrs. Martin and Louisa, Mrs. Lum, Capt. Burney, Mrs. Burney, Martin Burney, Mr. Rickman, Mrs. Rickman, Dr. Stoddart, William Dollin, Mr. Thompson, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, Mr. Fenwick, Mrs. Fenwick, Miss Fenwick, a man that saw you at our house one day, and a lady that heard me speak of you; Mrs. Buffam that heard Hazlitt mention you, Dr. Tuthill, Mrs. Tuthill, Colonel Harwood, Mrs. Harwood, Mr. Collier, Mrs. Collier, Mr. Sutton, Nurse, Mr. Fell, Mrs. Fell, Mr. Marshall, are very well, and occasionally inquire after you. Mary sends her love. [*Rest cut away.*]

['I have published a little book.' The circumstance that in 1805 Phillips put forth a little work called *The Book of the Rank and Dignities of British Society* has, on the strength of Lamb's sentence, led to the association of his name with it, and there are collectors who boldly ascribe it to him. But, more than doubtful, I am utterly unconvinced. The evidence of style is against such an ascription; it is not in the Lamb tradition, which, even when he was being a hack, insisted upon themes calling for fancy and imagination.

'Stamford.' In the *Elia* essay on 'Poor Relations' Lamb says that his father's boyhood was spent at Lincoln, and in Susan Yates's story in *Mrs. Leicester's School* we see the Lincolnshire fens, but of the history of the family we know nothing. I fancy Stamford is a true touch.

'The Persian ambassador.' A portrait of this splendid person is preserved at the India Office. Leigh Hunt says that Dyer was among the pilgrims to Primrose Hill.

'Kate * * * * * * * * *.' I have not found this.

'Mrs. Bland.' Maria Theresa Bland (1769–1838), a Jewess, and a mezzo-soprano, famous in simple ballads, who was connected with Drury Lane for many years.

'Braham is fled.' Braham did not sing in London in 1810, but joined Mrs. Billington in a long provincial tour. Phillips was Thomas Philipps (1774–1841), a singer and composer.

'Miss B * * * * * *.' Miss Burrell. See note to letter of 18th February, 1818.

'Not my poetry, but Quarles's.' In 'An Elegie,' stanza 16. Lamb does not quote quite correctly.

'Hazlitt's grammar.' *A New and Improved Grammar of the English Tongue. . . . By William Hazlitt, to which is added A New Guide to the English Tongue by Edward Baldwin* (William Godwin). Published by M. J. Godwin. 1810.

'Paranomasia.' The figure is correct, although Lamb's spelling is not quite right.

'A woman begged of me.' Lamb told this story at the end of his *Elia* essay 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars,' in the *London Magazine*, June 1822, but the passage was not reprinted in book form.

Of the friends on Lamb's list we have already met several. Mr. and Mrs. Norris were the Randal Norrises, now neighbours in the Temple. Dr. Stoddart, having left Malta, was now practising law in Doctors' Commons. Mr. and Mrs. Collier were the John Dyer Colliers, the parents of John Payne Collier. Thompson may be Marmaduke Thompson of Christ's Hospital. We meet some Buffams later, in the Moxon correspondence. Mr. Marshall was Godwin's friend. Mrs. Harwood was Holcroft's eldest daughter Sophia. Of Mrs. Lum, Mr. Dollin, and Mr. Sutton, I know nothing; but we have had the name of the ill-fated Mary Dollin in association with Charles Lloyd's.]

230. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated by H. C. R. *7th February 1810.*]

DR. R.,

My Brother whom you have met at my rooms (a plump good looking man of seven and forty!) has written a book about humanity, which I transmit to you herewith. Wilson the Publisher has put it in his head that you can get it Reviewed for him. I dare say it is not in the scope of your Review—but if you could put it in any likely train, he would rejoyce. For alas! our boasted Humanity partakes of Vanity. As it is, he teazes me to death with chusing to suppose that I could get it into all the Reviews at a moment's notice—I!! who have been set up as a mark for them to throw at, and would willingly consign them all to Hell flames and Megæra's snaky locks.

But here's the Book—and don't shew it Mrs. Collier, for I remember she makes excellent Eel soup, and the leading points of the Book are directed against that very process.

Yours truly C. LAMB.

At Home to-night—Wednesday.

[Addressed to 'Henry Robinson, Esq., 56 Hatton Garden, "with a Treatise on Cruelty to Animals."'

Lamb's brother, John Lamb, who was born in 1763, was now Accountant of the South-Sea House. His character is described by Lamb in the *Elia* essay 'My Relations,' where he figures as James Elia. Robinson in his *Diary* later frequently expresses his dislike of his dogmatic ways.

The pamphlet has been identified by Mr. L. S. Livingston as *A Letter to the Right Hon. William Windham, on his opposition to Lord Erskine's Bill for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.* It was published by Maxwell & Wilson at 17 Skinner

Street in 1810. No author's name is given. One copy only is known, and that is in America, and the owner declines to permit it to be reprinted. The particular passage referring to eel pie runs thus:

> If an eel had the wisdom of Solomon, he could not help himself in the ill-usage that befalls him; but if he had, and were told, that it was necessary for our subsistence that he should be eaten, that he must be skinned first, and then broiled; if ignorant of man's usual practice, he would conclude that the cook would so far use her reason as to cut off his head first, which is not fit for food, as then he might be skinned and broiled without harm; for however the other parts of his body might be convulsed during the culinary operations, there could be no feeling of consciousness therein, the communication with the brain being cut off; but if the woman were immediately to stick a fork into his eye, skin him alive, coil him up in a skewer, head and all, so that in the extremest agony he could not move, and forthwith broil him to death: then were the same Almighty Power that formed man from the dust, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, to call the eel into a new existence, with a knowledge of the treatment he had undergone, and he found that the instinctive disposition which man has in common with other carnivorous animals, which inclines him to cruelty, was not the sole cause of his torments; but that men did not attend to consider whether the sufferings of such insignificant creatures could be lessened: that eels were not the only sufferers; that lobsters and other shell fish were put into cold water and boiled to death by slow degrees in many parts of the sea coast; that these, and many other such wanton atrocities, were the consequence of carelessness occasioned by the pride of mankind despising their low estate, and of the general opinion that there is no punishable sin in the ill-treatment of animals designed for our use; that, therefore, the woman did not bestow so much thought on him as to cut his head off first, and that she would have laughed at any considerate person who should have desired such a thing; with what fearful indignation might he inveigh against the unfeeling metaphysician that, like a cruel spirit alarmed at the appearance of a dawning of mercy upon animals, could not rest satisfied with opposing the Cruelty Prevention Bill by the plea of possible inconvenience to mankind, highly magnified and emblazoned, but had set forth to the vulgar and unthinking of all ranks, in the jargon of proud learning, that man's obligations of morality towards the creatures subjected to his use are imperfect obligations!

Robinson's review was, I imagine, the *London Review*, founded by Richard Cumberland in February 1809, which, however, no longer existed, having run its brief course by November 1809.

'Megæra's snaky locks.' From *Paradise Lost*, x. 559:

> and up the trees
> Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
> That curl'd Megæra.

231. TO CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

March 10, 1810. E. I. Ho.

MY DEAR SIR,

The above are all the faults I, who profess myself to be a mere English Reader, could find after a scrupulous perusal twice over of your neat little Book. I assure you it gave me great pleasure in the perusal, much more in this shape than in the Manuscript, and I should be very sorry you should give up the finishing of it on so poor pretence as your *Age* [sixty-two], which is not so much by ten years as Dryden's when he wrote his fables, which are his best works allowed, and not more than Milton's when he had scarce entered upon his original Epic Poem. You have done nearly a third; persevere and let us see the whole. I am sure I should prize it for its Homeric plainness and truth above the confederate jumble of Pope, Broome and Fenton which goes under Pope's name, and is far inferior to his ILIAD. I have picked out what I think blemishes, but they are but a score of words (I am a mere word-pecker) in six times as many pages. The rest all gave me pleasure, and most of all the Book [the Sixth] in which Ulysses and Nausicaa meet. You have infused a kind of biblical patriarchal manner into it, it reads like some story of Jacob and Rachel, or some of those primitive manners. I am ashamed to carp at words, but I did it in obedience to your desires, and the plain reason why I did not acknowledge your kind present *sooner* was that I had no criticisms of value to make. I shall certainly beg the opinion of my friend who read the two first Books on this enlarged Performance. But he is so very much engaged that I cannot at present get at him, and besides him I have no acquaintance that takes much interest in Poetry, Greek or English. But I hope and adjure you to go on, and do not make excuses of Age till you have completed the Odyssey, and done a great part of Horace besides. Then you will be entitled to hang up your Harp.

I am, Dear Sir, with Love to all your family, your

C. LAMB.

[A few of Lamb's suggestions are picked from the list. Mr. Lloyd rendered Book i, lines 163–5:

> *εἰ κεῖνόν γ' Ἰθάκηνδε ἰδοίατο νοστήσαντα,*
> *πάντες κ' ἀρησαίατ' ἐλαφρότεροι πόδας εἶναι*
> *ἢ ἀφνειότεροι χρυσοῖό τε ἐσθῆτός τε.*
>
> Should he return, their fear would soon express
> How much swift feet excell'd parade of dress.

The comment was: '"Parade of dress" strikes the ear as too modern; though in reality the modernest English is not more removed from Greek than the ancientest, yet the imagination is unwilling to receive a word in a Translation of Homer which has not the sanction of years.'

Again, Mr. Lloyd employed 'whelming tide' as an equivalent for (Book i, line 183) *οἶνοπα πόντον*. Said Lamb: '"Whelming tide." A bad Epithet. We may speak of Vessels sunk beneath the whelming tide, but hardly of vessels sailing over it. It is a property of the sea to overwhelm, but ships riding over it do not naturally remind one of that property.'

Mr. Lloyd used 'patriotic.' Lamb objected: '*Patriotic* strikes my ears also as too modern. Besides that in English few words of more than three syllables chime well into a verse'; and a similar nicety of feeling for words informed his objection to the phrase 'express his sentiments.' Lamb called it 'modern and novel phraseology. I mean the phrase of novels. The word sentiment was scarcely Anglicised before the time of Sterne.' And when 'sentiment' occurred again Lamb wrote: '*Sentiments*—I would root this word out of a translation of Homer. It came in with Sterne, and was a child he had by Affectation.'

In the third Book (lines 199–200) Mr. Lloyd rendered:

> *καὶ σύ, φίλος—μάλα γάρ σ' ὁρόω καλόν τε μέγαν τε—*
> *ἄλκιμος ἔσσ', ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὀψιγόνων εὖ εἴπῃ,*
>
> And thou, my friend, of whom I augur well,
> Be brave, and strive in virtue to excel,
> That thy good deeds may live in future days,
> And be reported with deserved praise.

Lamb remarked: 'I doubt if Homer had any such an idea as we have when we talk of *striving to excel in virtue.* I am afraid the phrase is more correspondent to the Telemachus of Fenelon than of Homer. Orestes' revengeful slaughter of Ægisthus is the model to which Nestor directs Telemachus, something different from what we mean by virtue.'

The use of 'exit' called forth this rebuke: '*Exit* is a sad tombstone-word. It is thrice bad: bad as being Latin; as being a word of stage-direction; and as being inscribed on half the tombstones in the Kingdom.' Again, when Mr. Lloyd wrote (Book vi. 184):

> Envy will pine at such a happy sight,
> Benevolence survey it with delight,
>
> *—πόλλ' ἄλγεα δυσμενέεσσιν,*
> *χάρματα δ' εὐμενέτῃσι· μάλιστα δέ τ' ἔκλυον αὐτοί,*

Lamb was severe:

> 'Envy will pine, &c.
> Benevolence survey it with delight.

I should suspect these personifications are the Translator's. They sound *post*-Homeric.'

Finally there is this objection to the use of the word 'uncle' (Book vi. 330): '*Uncle*—rather a hazardous word; would you call Pallas his niece? I cannot conceive of such relationships as Uncles and Nieces and Cousins (at least the names of them) among the Gods.']

232. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

[No date: *middle of March 1810.*]

MY DEAR SARAH,

I have taken a large sheet of paper, as if I were going to write a long letter; but that is by no means my intention, for I only have time to write three lines to notify what I ought to have done the moment I received your welcome letter. Namely, that I shall be very much joyed to see you. Every morning lately I have been expecting to see you drop in, even before your letter came; and I have been setting my wits to work to think how to make you as comfortable as the nature of our inhospitable habits will admit. I must work while you are here; and I have been slaving very hard to get through with something before you come, that I may be quite in the way of it, and not teize you with complaints all day that I do not know what to do.

I am very sorry to hear of your mischance. Mrs. Rickman has just buried her youngest child. I am glad I am an old maid; for, you see, there is nothing but misfortunes in the marriage state.

Charles was drunk last night, and drunk the night before; which night before was at Godwin's, where we went, at a short summons from Mr. G., to play a solitary rubber, which was interrupted by the entrance of Mr. and little Mrs. Liston; and after them came Henry Robinson, who is now domesticated at Mr. Godwin's fireside, and likely to become a formidable rival to Tommy Turner. We finished there at twelve o'clock (Charles and Liston brim-full of gin and water and snuff): after which Henry Robinson spent a long evening by our fireside at home; and

there was much gin and water drunk, albeit only one of the party partook of it. And H. R. professed himself highly indebted to Charles for the useful information he gave him on sundry matters of taste and imagination, even after Charles could not speak plain for tipsiness. But still he swallowed the flattery and the spirits as savourily as Robinson did his cold water.

Last night was to be a night, but it was not. There was a certain son of one of Martin's employers, one young Mr. Blake; to do whom honour, Mrs. Burney brought forth, first rum, then a single bottle of champaine, long kept in her secret hoard; then two bottles of her best currant wine, which she keeps for Mrs. Rickman, came out; and Charles partook liberally of all these beverages, while Mr. Young Blake and Mr. Ireton talked of high matters, such as the merits of the Whip Club, and the merits of red and white champaine. Do I spell that last word right? Rickman was not there, so Ireton had it all his own way.

The alternating Wednesdays will chop off one day in the week from your jolly days, and I do not know how we shall make it up to you; but I will contrive the best I can. Phillips comes again pretty regularly, to the great joy of Mrs. Reynolds. Once more she hears the well-loved sounds of, 'How do you do, Mrs. Reynolds? How does Miss Chambers do?'

I have spun out my three lines amazingly. Now for family news. Your brother's little twins are not dead, but Mrs. John Hazlitt and her baby may be, for any thing I know to the contrary, for I have not been there for a prodigious long time. Mrs. Holcroft still goes about from Nicholson to Tuthil, and from Tuthil to Godwin, and from Godwin to Tuthil, and from Tuthil to Godwin, and from Godwin to Tuthil, and from Tuthil to Nicholson, to consult on the publication, or no publication, of the life of the good man, her husband. It is called the Life Everlasting. How does that same Life go on in your parts? Good bye, God bless you. I shall be glad to see you when you come this way.

Yours most affectionately,

M. LAMB.

I am going in great haste to see Mrs. Clarkson, for I must get back to dinner, which I have hardly time to do. I wish that dear,

good, amiable woman would go out of town. I thought she was clean gone; and yesterday there was a consultation of physicians held at her house, to see if they could keep her among them here a few weeks longer.

[Sarah Hazlitt paid a visit to the Lambs in April 1810; Hazlitt wrote a letter to her there from Winterslow.

Liston was John Liston (1776?–1846), the actor, whose mock biography Lamb wrote some years later. His wife was a diminutive comedienne, famous as Queen Dollallolla in *Tom Thumb*. Lamb may have known Liston through the Burneys, for he is said to have been an usher in Dr. Burney's school—Dr. Charles Burney, Captain Burney's brother. Tommy Turner was a friend of Godwin and Charles Clairmont.

'Henry Robinson.' Crabb Robinson's *Diary* shows us that his domestication by Godwin's fireside was not of long duration.

'Mr. Ireton.' Probably William Ayrton, the musical critic, a friend and neighbour of the Burneys, and later a friend of the Lambs, as we shall see.

'The alternating Wednesdays.' The Lambs seem to have given up their weekly Wednesday evening, which now became fortnightly. Later it was changed to Thursday and made monthly.

Mrs. Reynolds had been a Miss Chambers.

Mrs. Anderson's notes: 'Mrs. Hazlitt miscarried on the 6th March, and again on the 6th September 1810. Martha Rickman was buried 14 March 1810 at St. Margaret's, Westminster. Mary Lamb's work was her share in *Poetry for Children*.']

233. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

[*9th April 1810.*]

DEAR GUTCH,

I did not see your brother, who brought me Wither; but he understood, he said, you were daily expecting to come to town: this has prevented my writing. The books have pleased me excessively: I should think you could not have made a better selection. I never saw 'Philareté' before—judge of my pleasure. I could not forbear scribbling certain critiques in pencil on the blank leaves. Shall I send them, or may I expect to see you in town? Some of them are remarks on the character of Wither and of his writings. Do you mean to have anything of that kind? What I have said on 'Philareté' is poor, but I think some

of the rest not so bad: perhaps I have exceeded my commission in scrawling over the copies; but my delight therein must excuse me, and pencil-marks will rub out. Where is the Life? Write, for I am quite in the dark.

Yours, with many thanks, C. LAMB.

Perhaps I could digest the few critiques prefixed to the Satires, Shepherds Hunting, &c., into a short abstract of Wither's character and works, at the end of his Life. But, may be, you don't want any thing, and have said all you wish in the Life.

[John Mathew Gutch (1776–1861), whom we have met before, was at this time living at Bristol, where he owned, edited, and printed *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*. He had been printing for his own pleasure an edition of George Wither's poems, which he had sent to Lamb for his opinion, intending ultimately to edit Wither fully. Lamb returned the volumes with a number of comments, many of which he afterwards incorporated in his essay 'On the poetry of George Wither,' printed in his *Works* in 1818. Gutch subsequently handed the volumes to his friend Dr. John Nott of the Hot Wells, Bristol, who had views of his own upon Wither, and who commented in his turn on the poet and on Lamb's criticism of the poet. In course of time the volumes fell into Lamb's hands again, when Nott's comments on Wither and on Lamb received treatment. They were ultimately given by Lamb to his friend, Brook Pulham, of the India House (who made the caricature etching of 'Ælia'), and when I saw them they were in the library of the late Algernon Charles Swinburne, who admired Lamb to idolatry, at The Pines, Putney. Swinburne told the story of the book in the *Nineteenth Century* for January 1885, reprinted in his *Miscellanies*, 1886. See the notes to vol. i. of my edition of Lamb's *Works*. The last word was with Nott, for when Gutch printed a three-or-four-volume edition of Wither in 1820 under Nott's editorship, many of Lamb's best things were included as Nott's.

Further remarks by Lamb on Wither came to light in the Terry Sale at the Anderson Galleries in New York on 7th November 1934 in a MS. bound up with five portraits and a scrap of a note to Charles Cowden Clarke.]

234. TO BASIL MONTAGU

Mr. Hazlitt's: Winterslow, near Sarum,
12th July, 1810.

DEAR [MONTAGU],

I have turned and twisted the MSS. in my head, and can make nothing of them. I knew when I took them that I could not;

but I do not like to do an act of ungracious necessity at once; so I am ever committing myself by half engagements and total failures. I cannot make any body understand why I can't do such things. It is a defect in my occiput. I cannot put other people's thoughts together; I forget every paragraph as fast as I read it; and my head has received such a shock by an all-night journey on the top of the coach, that I shall have enough to do to nurse it into its natural pace before I go home. I must devote myself to imbecility. I must be gloriously useless while I stay here. How is Mrs. [M.]? will she pardon my inefficiency? The city of Salisbury is full of weeping and wailing. The Bank has stopt payment; and every body in the town kept money at it, or has got some of its notes. Some have lost all they had in the world. It is the next thing to seeing a city with a plague within its walls. The Wilton people are all undone. All the manufacturers there kept cash at the Salisbury bank; and I do suppose it to be the unhappiest county in England this, where I am making holiday.

We purpose setting out for Oxford Tuesday fortnight, and coming thereby home. But no more night travelling. My head is sore (understand it of the inside) with that deduction of my natural rest which I suffered coming down. Neither Mary nor I can spare a morsel of our rest. It is incumbent on us to be misers of it. Travelling is not good for us—we travel so seldom. If the Sun be Hell, it is not for the fire, but for the sempiternal motion of that miserable Body of Light. How much more dignified leisure hath a mussel glued to his unpassable rocky limit, two inch square! He hears the tide roll over him, backwards and forwards twice a-day (as the d——d Salisbury Long Coach goes and returns in eight and forty hours), but knows better than to take an outside night-place a top on't. He is the Owl of the Sea. Minerva's fish. The fish of Wisdom.

Our kindest remembrances to Mrs. [M.].

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[If the date is correct we must suppose that the Lambs had made a second visit to the Hazlitts and were intending to return by way of Oxford (see next letter).

Basil Montagu was a barrister and humanitarian, a friend of Wordsworth and Coleridge, and afterwards step-father-in-law of Procter. He was born in

1770 and lived until 1851. Lamb probably addressed to him many other letters, also to his third wife, Carlyle's 'noble lady.' But the correspondence was destroyed by Mrs. Procter.

The MSS. referred to cannot now be identified.]

235. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[*9th August 1810.*]

DEAR H.,

Epistemon is not well. Our pleasant excursion has ended sadly for one of us. You will guess I mean my sister. She got home very well (I was very ill on the journey) and continued so till Monday night, when her complaint came on, and she is now absent from home.

I am glad to hear you are all well. I think I shall be mad if I take any more journeys with two experiences against it. I find all well here. Kind remembrances to Sarah—have just got her letter.

H. Robinson has been to Blenheim. He says you will be sorry to hear that we should have asked for the Titian Gallery there. One of his friends knew of it, and asked to see it. It is never shown but to those who inquire for it.

The pictures are all Titians, Jupiter and Ledas, Mars and Venuses, &c., all naked pictures, which may be a reason they don't show it to females. But he says they are very fine; and perhaps it is shown separately to put another fee into the shower's pocket. Well, I shall never see it.

I have lost all wish for sights. God bless you. I shall be glad to see you in London.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

Thursday.

['Epistemon.' This term for Mary Lamb—wise in counsel and prudence, possibly from the *Odyssey*, xvi. 374, with which Lamb had recently been busy for his *Wanderings of Ulysses*—illustrates his attitude, affectionate, respectful, not unmixed with fun, towards her, and refers also, it is probable, to some of her counsels to Hazlitt and his wife, to whom, as we have seen, when she was Miss Stoddart, Mary Lamb had written some rather disciplinary letters.

Hazlitt subsequently saw the Blenheim Titians and wrote of them with gusto in his description of the Picture Galleries of England.]

236. TO MRS. THOMAS CLARKSON

Monday, 18 Sep. 1810.

DEAR MRS. CLARKSON,

I did not write till I could have the satisfaction of sending you word that my Sister was better. She is in fact quite restored, and will be with me in little more than a week.—I received Mr C.'s Letter and transmitted it to Hazlitt—My kind Love to him, and to Miss W. Tell her I hope that while she stays in London, she will make our chambers her Lodging. If she can put up with half a Bed, I am sure she will be a most welcome visitor to Mary and me.—The Montagus set out for the North this day. What fine things they are going to see, for the first time! which I have seen, but in all human probability shall never see again!—the mountains often come back to me in my dreams, or rather I miss them at those times, for I have been repeatedly haunted with the *same dream*, which is that I am in Cumberland, that I have been there some weeks, and am at the end of my Holidays, but in all that time I have not seen Skiddaw &c.—the Hills are all vanished, and I shall go home without seeing them. The trouble of this dream denotes the weight they must have had on my mind, and while I was there, which was almost oppressive, and perhaps is caused by the great difficulty I have in recalling any thing like a distinct form of any one of those great masses to my memory. Bless me I have scarce left room to say Good-B'ye.— C. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The letter from Clarkson to Hazlitt was probably about a portrait painted by H. about this time. On 15th July 1811 Hazlitt writes to Thos. Robinson (H. C. R.'s brother): "I am glad to hear that Mr. Clarkson's picture is thought like, and only wish that it were what it should be." This letter is endorsed by H. C. R.: "To T. R. about his portrait. So bad a one that it was never finished, and what was done was destroyed."']

237. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Friday, 19 Oct., 1810. E. I. Ho.

DR. W.,

I forwarded the Letter which you sent to me, without opening it, to your Sister at Binfield. She has returned it to me, and begs

me to tell you that she intends returning from B. on Monday or Tuesday next, when Priscilla leaves it, and that it was her earnest wish to spend another week with us in London, but she awaits another Letter from home to determine her. I can only say that she appeared so much pleased with London, and that she is so little likely to see it again for a long time, that if you can spare her, it will be almost a pity not. But doubtless she will have heard again from you, before I can get a reply to this Letter & what she next hears she says will be decisive. If wanted, she will set out immediately from London. Mary has been very ill which you have heard I suppose from the Montagues. She is very weak and low spirited now. I was much pleased with your continuation of the Essay on Epitaphs. It is the only sensible thing which has been written on that subject & it goes to the Bottom. In particular I was pleased with your Translation of that Turgid Epitaph into the plain feeling under it. It is perfectly a Test. But what is the reason we have so few good Epitaphs after all?

A very striking instance of your position might be found in the Church yard of Ditton upon Thames, if you know such a place. Ditton upon Thames has been blessed by the residence of a Poet, who for Love or Money, I do not well know which, has dignified every grave stone for the last few years with bran new verses, all different, and all ingenious, with the Author's name at the Bottom of each. The sweet Swan of Thames has artfully diversified his strains & his rhymes, that the same thought never occurs twice. More justly perhaps, as no thought ever occurs at all, there was a physical impossibility that the same thought should recur. It is long since I saw and read these inscriptions, but I remember the impression was of a smug Usher at his desk, in the intervals of instruction levelling his pen. Of Death as it consists of dust and worms and mourners and uncertainty he had never thought, but the word death he had often seen separate & conjunct with other words, till he had learned to skill of all its attributes as glibly as Unitarian Belsham will discuss you the attributes of the word God, in a Pulpit, and will talk of infinity with a tongue that dangles from a scull that never reached in thought and thorough imagination two inches, or further than from his hand to his mouth, or from the vestry to the Sounding Board. [But the] epitaphs were trim and sprag & patent, &

pleased the survivors of Thames Ditton above the old mumpsimus of Afflictions Sore.

To do justice though, it must be owned that even the excellent Feeling which dictated this Dirge when new, must have suffered something in passing thro' so many thousand applications, many of them no doubt quite misplaced, as I have seen in Islington Churchy'd (I think) an Epitaph to an Infant who died Ætatis 4 months, with this seasonable inscription appended, Honor thy Fathr. and Mothr. that thy days may be long in the Land &c.— Sincerely wishing your children better [*words cut out with signature*].

[Binfield, near Windsor, was the home of Dorothy Wordsworth's uncle, Dr. Cookson, Canon of Windsor.

'Unitarian Belsham.' Thomas Belsham (1750–1829), minister of the Gravel Pit Unitarian Chapel at Hackney, mentioned again in Lamb's 'Letter to Southey' in 1823.

Priscilla Lloyd had married Christopher Wordsworth, afterwards Master of Trinity, in 1804.

Wordsworth's 'Essay on Epitaphs' was printed in part in the *Friend*, 22nd February 1810. For the remainder see Wordsworth's *Works*. Part II began with a reference to *Rosamund Gray*. I quote the passage containing the turgid example.

> Let us return to an instance of common life. I quote it with reluctance, not so much for its absurdity as that the expression in one place will strike at first sight as little less than impious; and it is indeed, though unintentionally so, most irreverent. But I know no other example that will so forcibly illustrate the important truth I wish to establish. The following epitaph is to be found in a church-yard in Westmoreland; which the present Writer has reason to think of with interest as it contains the remains of some of his ancestors and kindred. The date is 1673.
>
> Under this Stone, Reader, inter'd doth lye,
> Beauty and Virtue's true epitomy.
> At her appearance the noone-son
> Blush'd and shrunk in 'cause quite outdon.
> In her concentered did all graces dwell:
> God pluck'd my rose that He might take a smel.
> I'll say no more: but weeping wish I may
> Soone with thy dear chaste ashes com to lay.
> Sic efflevit Maritus.
>
> Can anything go beyond this in extravagance? yet, if the fundamental thoughts be translated into a natural style, they will be found reasonable and affecting——'The woman who lies here interred, was in my eyes a perfect image of beauty and virtue; she was to me a brighter object than the sun in heaven: God took her, who was my delight, from this earth to bring her nearer to Himself. Nothing further is worthy to be said than that weeping

I wish soon to lie by thy dear chaste ashes. Thus did the husband pour out his tears.'

Wordsworth lived to write an epitaph on Lamb, but it was too long to be used on a gravestone. A few lines are on the tablet in Edmonton Church.

Lamb had begun his criticisms of churchyard epitaphs very early: Talfourd tells that, when quite a little boy, after reading a number of flattering inscriptions, he asked Mary Lamb: 'Where do the naughty people lie?']

238. JOINT LETTER OF MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *13th November 1810.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

My brother's letter, which I did not see, I am sure has distressed you sadly. I was then so ill as to alarm him exceedingly, and he thought me quite incapable of any kind of business. It is a great mortification to me to be such an useless creature, and I feel myself greatly indebted to you for the very kind manner in which you take this ungracious matter: but I will say no more on this unpleasant subject. I am at present under the care of Dr. Tuthill. I think I have derived great benefit from his medicines. He has also made a water drinker of me, which, contrary to my expectations, seems to agree with me very well.

I very much regret that you were so untimely snatched away; the lively recollection you seem to retain of London scenes will I hope induce you to return, in happier times, for I must still hope for better days.

We have had many pleasant hours with Coleridge,—if I had not known how ill he is I should have had no idea of it, for he has been very chearful. But yet I have no good news to send you of him, for two days ago, when I saw him last, he had not begun his course of medicine & regimen under Carlisle. I have had a very chearful letter from Mrs. Clarkson. She complained a little of your friend Tom, but she says she means to devote the winter to the task of new molding him, I am afraid she will find it no easy task.

Mrs. Montague was very sorry to find you gone. I have not seen much of her, for I have kept very much at home since her

return. I mean to stay at home and keep early hours all this winter.

I have a new maid coming this evening. Betty, that you left here, went from me last week, and I took a girl lately from the country, who was fetched away in a few days by her sister, who took it into her head that the Temple was an improper place for a girl to live in. I wish the one that is coming may suit me. She is seven & twenty, with a very plain person, therefore I may hope she will be in little danger here.

Henry Robinson, and many other friends that you made here, enquire continually after you. The Spanish lady is gone, and now poor Robinson is left quite forlorn.

The streets remind me so much of you that I wish for you every showy shop I pass by. I hope we had many pleasant fireside hours together, but I almost fear the stupid dispirited state I was in made me seem a very flat companion; but I know I listened with great pleasure to many interesting conversations. I thank you for what you have done for Phillips, his fate will be decided in about a week. He has lately breakfasted with Sir Joseph Banks, who received him with great civility but made him no promise of support. Sir Joseph told him a new candidate had started up who it was expected would be favoured by the council. I am afraid Phillips stands a very poor chance.

I am doing nothing, I wish I was, for if I were once more busily employed at work, I should be more satisfied with myself. I should not feel so helpless, & so useless.

I hope you will write soon, your letters give me great pleasure; you have made me so well acquainted with all your household, that I must hope for frequent accounts how you are all going on. Remember us affectionately to your brother & sister. I hope the little Katherine continues mending. God bless you all & every one.

Your affectionate friend

M. LAMB.

II. CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

Mary has left a little space for me to fill up with nonsense, as the Geographers used to cram monsters in the voids of their maps

& call it Terra Incognita. She has told you how she has taken to water, like a hungry otter. I too limp after her in lame imitation, but it goes against me a little *at first*. I have been *aquavorous* now for full four days, and it seems a moon. I am full of cramps & rheumatisms, and cold internally so that fire won't warm me, yet I bear all for virtues sake. Must I then leave you, Gin, Rum, Brandy, Aqua Vitæ—pleasant jolly fellows—Damn Temperance and them that first invented it, some Anti Noahite. Coleridge has powdered his head, and looks like Bacchus, Bacchus ever sleek and young. He is going to turn sober, but his Clock has not struck yet, meantime he pours down goblet after goblet, the 2d to see where the 1st is gone, the 3d to see no harm happens to the second, a fourth to say there's another coming, and a 5th to say he's not sure he's the last. William Henshaw is dead. He died yesterday, aged 56. It was but a twelvemonth or so back that his Father, an ancient Gunsmith & my Godfather, sounded me as to my willingness to be guardian to this William in case of his (the old man's) death. William had three times broke in business, twice in England, once in t'other Hemisphere. He returned from America a sot & hath liquidated all debts. What a hopeful ward I am rid of. Ætatis 56. I must have taken care of his morals, seen that he did not form imprudent connections, given my consent before he could have married &c. From all which the stroke of death hath relieved me. Mrs. Reynolds is the name of the Lady to whom I will remember you to-morrow. Farewell. Wish me strength to continue. I've been eating jugg'd Hare. The toast & water makes me quite sick.

C. LAMB.

[After the preceding letter Mary Lamb had been taken ill—but not, I think, mentally—and Dorothy Wordsworth's visit was put off.

Coleridge, the *Friend* having ceased, had come to London with the Montagus in October to stay with them indefinitely at 55 Frith Street, Soho. But on the journey Montagu had inadvisedly repeated what he unjustifiably called a warning phrase of Wordsworth's concerning Coleridge's difficult habits as a guest—the word 'nuisance' being mentioned—and this had so plunged Coleridge in grief that he went to a hotel until Morgan found him and took him to his house at 7 Portland Place, Hammersmith. Montagu's indiscretion led to a quarrel between Coleridge and Wordsworth which was long in healing. This is no place in which to tell the story, which has small part in Lamb's life; but it led to one of the few letters from Coleridge to Lamb that have been preserved (see E. H. Coleridge's edition of Coleridge's *Letters*, page 586).

During this time Coleridge seems to have been much at Lamb's. On 14th November Robinson met him, for the first time, there: and on the next day they were both at a party there.

Carlisle was Sir Anthony Carlisle (1768–1840), the surgeon and a friend of Lamb.

'The Spanish lady.' Madame Lavaggi. See Robinson's *Diary*, 1869, vol. 1, page 303.

'Phillips.' This would be Ned Phillips, I presume, not the colonel. I have not discovered for what post he was trying.

'The little Katherine.' Catherine Wordsworth, born 6th September 1808, lived only until 4th June 1812.

'I have been *aquavorous*.' Writing to Dorothy Wordsworth on 23rd December Crabb Robinson says that Lamb had abstained from alcohol and tobacco since Lord Mayor's Day.

'William Henshaw.' I know nothing more of this unfortunate man.]

239. JOINT LETTER OF MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *23rd November 1810.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Miss Monkhouse left town yesterday, but I think I am able to answer all your enquiries. I saw her on Sunday evening at Mrs. Montagu's. She looked very well & said her health was greatly improved. She promised to call on me before she left town but the weather having been very bad I suppose has prevented her. She received the letter which came through my brother's hands and I have learned from Mrs. Montagu that all your commissions are executed. It was Carlisle that she consulted, and she is to continue taking his prescriptions in the country. Mr. Monkhouse & Mr. Addison drank tea with us one evening last week. Miss Monkhouse is a very pleasing girl, she reminds me, a little, of Miss Hutchinson. I have not seen Henry Robinson for some days past, but I remember he told me he had received a letter from you, and he talked of Spanish papers which he should send to Mr. Southey. I wonder he does not write, for I have always understood him to be a very regular correspondent, and he seemed very proud of your letter. I am tolerably well, but I still affect the invalid—take medicines, and keep at home as much

as I possibly can. Water-drinking, though I confess it to be a flat thing, is become very easy to me. Charles perseveres in it most manfully.

Coleridge is just in the same state as when I wrote last—I have not seen him since Sunday, he was then at Mr. Morgan's but talked of taking a lodging.

Phillips feels a certainty that he shall lose his election, for the new candidate is himself a Fellow of the Royal Society, and [it] is thought Sir Joseph Banks will favour him. It will now be soon decided.

My new maid is now sick in bed. Am I not unlucky? She would have suited me very well if she had been healthy, but I must send her away if she is not better tomorrow.

Charles promised to add a few lines, I will therefore leave him plenty of room, for he may perhaps think of something to entertain you. I am sure I cannot.

I hope you will not return to Grasmere till all fear of the Scarlet Fever is over, I rejoice to hear so good an account of the children and hope you will write often. When I write next I will endeavour to get a frank. This I cannot do but when the parliament is sitting, and as you seemed anxious about Miss Monkhouse I would not defer sending this, though otherwise it is not worth paying one penny for.

God bless you all.

Yours affectionately

M. LAMB.

II. CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

We are in a pickle. Mary from her affectation of physiognomy has hired a stupid big country wench who looked honest, as she thought, and has been doing her work some days but without eating—eats no butter nor meat, but prefers cheese with her tea for breakfast—and now it comes out that she was ill when she came with lifting her mother about (who is now with God) when she was dying, and with riding up from Norfolk 4 days and nights in the waggon. She got advice yesterday and took something which has made her bring up a quart of blood, and she now lies, a dead weight upon our humanity, in her bed, incapable of getting

up, refusing to go into an hospital, having no body in town but a poor asthmatic dying Uncle, whose son lately married a drab who fills his house, and there is no where she can go, and she seems to have made up her mind to take her flight to heaven from our bed.—O God! O God! for the little wheelbarrow which trundled the Hunchback from door to door to try the various charities of different professions of Mankind!

Here's her Uncle just crawled up, he is far liker Death than she. O the Parish, the Parish, the hospital, the infirmary, the charnel house, these are places meet for such guests, not our quiet mansion where nothing but affluent plenty and literary ease should abound.—Howard's House, Howard's House, or where the Parylitic descended thro' the sky-light (what a God's Gift) to get at our Savior. In this perplexity such topics as Spanish papers and Monkhouses sink into comparative insignificance. What shall we do?—If she died, it were something: gladly would I pay the coffin maker and the bellman and searchers—O Christ.

C. L.

[Miss Monkhouse was the daughter of the Wordsworths' and Lambs' friend, Thomas Monkhouse.

'Mr. Addison.' I have not traced this gentleman.

Miss Hutchinson was Sarah Hutchinson, sister of Mrs. Wordsworth.

'The Hunchback.' In the *Arabian Nights*.

'Far liker Death.' A recollection of the line in the first version of *The Ancient Mariner*: 'And she is far liker Death than he.'

'Howard's House.' Hardly likely to be Coldbath Fields Prison, erected in 1794 after some suggestions of Howard the philanthropist.

'The Paralytic.' See Mark ii.]

240. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[Dated at end: *28th November 1810.*]

DEAR HAZZLIT,

I sent you on Saturday a Cobbet containing your reply to Edinb. Rev. which I thought you would be glad to receive as an example of attention on the part of Mr. Cobbet to insert it so speedily; did you get it?—We have received your Pig and return you thanks, it will be drest in due form with appropriate sauce this day.—Mary has been very ill indeed since you saw her, that

is, as ill as she can be to remain at home. But she is a good deal better now, owing to a very careful regimen, she drinks nothing but water and never goes out, she does not even go to the Captain's. Her indisposition has been ever since that night you left Town, the night Miss W. came; her coming, and that damn'd infernal bitch Mrs. Godwin coming & staying so late that night, so overset her that she lay broad awake all that night, and it was by a miracle that she escaped a very bad illness which I thoroughly expected.—I have made up my mind that she shall never have any one in the house again with her, and that no one shall sleep with her not even for a night, for it is a very serious thing to be always living with a kind of fever upon her, & therefore I am sure you will take it in good part if I say that if Mrs. Hazlitt comes to town at any time, however glad we shall be to see her in the daytime, I cannot ask her to spend a night under our roof. Some decision we must come to, for the harassing fever that we have both been in, owing to Miss Wordsw[s] coming, is not to be borne, & I had rather be dead than so alive. However at present owing to a regimen & medicines which Tuthill, who very kindly volunteer'd the care of her, has given her, she is a great deal quieter, though too much harrassd by Company, who cannot or will not see how late hours & society teaze her.—

Poor Phillips had the cup dash'd out of his lips as it were. He had every prospect of the situation, when about ten days since one of the Council of the R. Society started for the Place himself, being a rich merchant who lately failed, and he will certainly be elected on Friday next. P. is very sore & miserable about it.—

Coleridge is in Town, or at least at Hammersmith. He is writing or going to write in the Courier against Cobbet & in favor of Paper Money.—

No news.—remember me kindly to Sara. I write from the office.—

Yours ever

Wednesd[y]. 28 Nov 1810 C. LAMB.

I just open'd it to say the Pig upon proof hath turned out as good as I predicted. My fauces yet retain the sweet porcine odor.—I find you have rec[d] the Cobbet, I think your Paper complete—

Mrs. Reynolds, who is a sage woman, approves of the Pig.—

['A Cobbet.' This was Cobbett's *Political Register* for 24th November 1810, containing Hazlitt's letter upon 'Mr. Malthus and the Edinburgh Reviewers,' signed 'The Author of a Reply to the *Essay on Population*.' Hazlitt's reply had been criticized in the *Edinburgh* for August, probably only just published.
The postcript contains Lamb's first passage in praise of roast pig.]

241. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: probably *November or December 1810*.]

DEAR GODWIN,

I have found it for several reasons indispensable to my comfort, and to my sister's, to have no visitors in the forenoon. If I cannot accomplish this I am determined to leave town.

I am extremely sorry to do anything in the slightest degree that may seem offensive to you or to Mrs. Godwin, but when a general rule is fixed on, you know how odious in a case of this sort it is to make exceptions; I assure you I have given up more than one friendship in stickling for this point. It would be unfair to those from whom I have parted with regret to make exceptions, which I would not do for them. Let me request you not to be offended, and to request Mrs. G. not to be offended, if I beg both your compliances with this wish. Your friendship is as dear to me as that of any person on earth, and if it were not for the necessity of keeping tranquillity at home, I would not seem so unreasonable.

If you were to see the agitation that my sister is in, between the fear of offending you and Mrs. G. and the difficulty of maintaining a system which she feels we must do to live without wretchedness, you would excuse this seeming strange request, which I send you with a trembling anxiety as to its reception with you, whom I would never offend. I rely on your goodness.

C. LAMB.

[I place next to this another undated letter to Godwin, but it may be much earlier in time.]

242. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[No date: *? December 1810.*]

I repent. Can that God whom thy votaries say that thou hast demolished expect more? I did indite a splenetic letter, but did the black Hypocondria never gripe *thy* heart, till thou hast taken a friend for an enemy? The foul fiend Flibbertigibbet leads me over four inched bridges, to course my own shadow for a traitor. There are certain positions of the moon, under which I counsel thee not to take anything written from this domicile as serious.

I rank thee with Alves, Latinè Helvetius, or any of his cursed crew? Thou art my friend, and henceforth my philosopher—thou shalt teach Distinction to the junior branches of my household, and Deception to the greyhaired Janitress at my door.

What! Are these atonements? Can Arcadians be brought upon knees, creeping and crouching?

Come, as Macbeth's drunken porter says, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock, knock—seven times in a day shalt thou batter at my peace, and if I shut aught against thee, save the Temple of Janus, may Briareus, with his hundred hands, in each a brass knocker, lead me such a life.

C. LAMB.

['The foul fiend Flibbertigibbet.' *King Lear*, III. iv. 18.

We know that Mary Lamb had recovered by 20th December because Robinson records meeting her with her brother and Coleridge, 'by accident.'

If at this time and for the next two or three years there are few letters the reason may be either that the originals have disappeared or—what seems more likely—that Lamb was being very busy with work for Leigh Hunt's *Reflector*, for which he wrote not only such fantasies as the letter 'On the Inconveniences Resulting from Being Hanged,' in 1811, but the minutely-reasoned critical analytical studies of the Genius of Hogarth, also in 1811, and the Tragedies of Shakespeare in 1812.

If, however, there are few letters, we have Crabb Robinson's Diary to keep us informed as to the little household. Thus on 8th January he was at the Lambs', and found Lamb unwell. It was then that Robinson was surprised by hearing Lamb describe Coleridge as a greater man than Wordsworth.

The first letter of the year 1811 to which an approximately accurate date can be given is the following.]

243. MARY LAMB TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: *March 1811.*]

MY DEAR MATILDA,

Coleridge has given me a very chearful promise that he will wait on Lady Jerningham any day you will be pleased to appoint; he offered to write to you; but I found it was to be done *tomorrow*, and as I am pretty well acquainted with his tomorrows, I thought good to let you know his determination *today*. He is in town today, but as he is often going to Hammersmith for a night or two, you had better perhaps send the invitation through me, and I will manage it for you as well as I can. You had better let him have four or five days' previous notice, and you had better send the invitation as soon as you can; for he seems tolerably well just now. I mention all these betters, because I wish to do the best I can for you, perceiving, as I do, it is a thing you have set your heart upon. He dined one [d]ay in company with Catilana (is that the way you spell her Italian name?—I am reading Sallust, and had like to have written Catiline). How I should have liked, and how you would have liked, to have seen Coleridge and Catilana together!

You have been very good of late to let me come and see you so seldom, and you are a little goodish to come so seldom here, because you stay away from a kind motive. But if you stay away always, as I fear you mean to do, I would not give one pin for your good intentions. In plain words, come and see me very soon; for though I be not sensitive as some people, I begin to feel strange qualms for having driven you from me.

Yours affectionately,

M. LAMB.

Wednesday.

Alas! Wednesday shines no more to me now.

Miss Duncan played famously in the new comedy, which went off as famously. By the way, she put in a spiteful piece of wit, I verily believe of her own head; and methought she stared me full in the face. The words were 'As silent as an author in company.' Her hair and herself looked remarkably well.

[Angelica Catalani (1782–1849) was the great singer. I find no record of Coleridge's meeting with her.

'Miss Duncan.' Praise of this lady in Miss Hardcastle and other parts will be found in Leigh Hunt's *Critical Essays on the Performers of the London Theatres*, 1807. At this time she was playing with the Drury Lane Company at the Lyceum. Mrs. Anderson says that the new play was *Ourselves*, by Marianne Chambers, produced on 2nd March, where there is the line 'Lud, you look as dull as a domino at a masquerade or a poor author in company.']

244. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN MORGAN
(*Fragment*)

[Dated at end: *8th March 1811.*]

There—don't read any further, because the Letter is not intended for you but for Coleridge, who might perhaps not have opened it directed to him suo nomine. It is to invite C. to Lady Jerningham's on Sunday. Her address is to be found within. We come to Hammersmith notwithstanding on Sunday, and hope Mrs. M. will not think of getting us Green Peas or any such expensive luxuries. A plate of plain Turtle, another of Turbot, with good roast Beef in the rear, and, as Alderman Curtis says, whoever can't make a dinner of that ought to be damn'd.

C. LAMB.

Friday night, 8 Mar., 1811.

[Robinson tells us that Mary Lamb was taken ill at 5 a.m. 9th March, and removed by Charles to an asylum at 7 a.m. Full details are given by Coleridge in a letter to Matilda Betham, written Thursday afternoon, 14th March. (See *House of Letters*, page 131.)

On 16th March 1811 Lamb called on Crabb Robinson and afterwards they went, with the Colliers, to Covent Garden to see *Cato* and *Bluebeard*. Mary Lamb was still away.

Mary Lamb's illness lasted until 7th May. On 15th May 1811 Crabb Robinson records a pleasant call on the Lambs, when Charles read aloud his version of the story of Prince Dorus, the long-nosed king. This version was published by Hodgkin for Godwin in 1811.

On 13th June 1811 Crabb Robinson called on Lamb and found John Lamb there. The evening was spent in a discussion of punning.

On 21st July Crabb Robinson found Lamb suffering from a bad eye caused by a fellow clerk, H. Wadd, throwing ink into it. It was of Wadd, whom, in a later letter, Lamb refers to as a 'sad shuffler,' that he wrote the epigram:

What Wadd knows, God knows,
But God knows *what* Wadd knows.

On 3rd August Crabb Robinson was at Lamb's. 'He was serious and therefore very interesting.' During the evening he resented Coleridge being called 'poor Coleridge' and pitied.

245. TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: *? 27th September 1811.*]

DEAR MISS BETHAM,

I am very sorry, but I was pre-engaged for this evening when Eliza communicated the contents of your letter. She herself also is gone to Walworth to pass some days with Miss Hays—

G— forbid I should
pass my days
with Miss H—ys

but that is neither here nor there. We will both atone for this accident by calling upon you as early as possible.

I am setting out to engage Mr. Dyer to your Party, but what the issue of my adventure will be, cannot be known, till the wafer has closed up this note for ever.

Yours truly,

Friday. C. LAMB.

[Mary Matilda Betham (1776–1852), to whom Lamb writes for the first time, was an author and miniature-painter who is first mentioned in the letter to Manning of 26th February 1808. We shall see more of her. Eliza was, I guess, Eliza Fenwick, the daughter, an actress. For further details see *The Fate of the Fenwicks*, by A. F. Wedd, 1927. Miss Hays we last heard of in the letter to Manning of 13th February 1800.]

246. JOINT LETTER OF MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HAZLITT

2 Oct., 1811.
Temple.

MY DEAR SARAH,

I have been a long time anxiously expecting the happy news that I have just received. I address you because, as the letter has been lying some days at the India House, I hope you are able to sit up and read my congratulations on the little live boy you have been so many years wishing for. As we old women say, 'May he live to be a great comfort to you!' I never knew an event of the kind that gave me so much pleasure as the little long-looked-for-come-at-last's arrival; and I rejoiced to hear his honour has begun to suck—the word was not distinctly written and I was a long time

making out the solemn fact. I hope to hear from you soon, for I am desirous to know if your nursing labours are attended with any difficulties. I wish you a happy *getting-up*, and a merry christening.

Charles sends his love, perhaps though he will write a scrap to Hazlitt at the end. He is now looking over me, he is always in my way, for he has had a month's holydays at home, but I am happy to say they end on Monday—when mine begin, for I am going to pass a week at Richmond with Mrs. Burney. She has been dying, but she went to the Isle of Wight and recovered once more, and she is finishing her recovery at Richmond. When there I intend to read Novels and play at Piquet all day long.

Yours truly,

M. LAMB.

II. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

DEAR HAZLITT,

I cannot help accompanying my sister's congratulations to Sarah with some of my own to you on this happy occasion of a man child being born—

Delighted Fancy already sees him some future rich alderman or opulent merchant; painting perhaps a little in his leisure hours for amusement like the late H. Bunbury, Esq.

Pray, are the Winterslow Estates entailed? I am afraid lest the young dog when he grows up should cut down the woods, and leave no groves for widows to take their lonesome solace in. The Wem Estate of course can only devolve on him, in case of your brother leaving no male issue.

Well, my blessing and heaven's be upon him, and make him like his father, with something a better temper and a smoother head of hair, and then all the men and women must love him.

Martin and the Card-boys join in congratulations. Love to Sarah. Sorry we are not within Caudle-shot. C. LAMB.

If the widow be assistant on this notable occasion, give our due respects and kind remembrances to her.

[William Hazlitt's son, William Hazlitt, afterwards the Registrar, was born on 26th September 1811. He had been preceded by another boy, in 1809, who lived, however, only a few months.

'H. Bunbury.' Henry William Bunbury, the caricaturist and painter, and the husband of Goldsmith's friend, Catherine Horneck, the 'Jessamy Bride.' He died in 1811.

The Card-boys would be Lamb's Wednesday visitors.

The widow was Mrs. Stoddart.

A letter from Lamb to Charles Lloyd, Junior, belonging to this period, is now no more, in common with all but two of his letters, the remainder of which were destroyed by Lloyd's son, Charles Grosvenor Lloyd. Writing to Daniel Stuart on 13th October 1812 Wordsworth says: 'Lamb writes to Lloyd that Coleridge's play (Coleridge's *Remorse*) was accepted.'

We know from a letter to Rickman that Coleridge was at the Lambs' on 10th October 1811, and observed that Lamb was smoking too much.]

247. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN MORGAN

Early October 1811.

DEAR M.,

The dark November fogs are come, Night travelling with flambeaux is expensive; without, dangerous. Add to this, that the migrative Actress has not yet taken her flight, and in all birdish probability sets out tomorrow. Our dinner at Hammersmith must cool for another day. Where is the Lecturer, quasi lecturus? he has not been heard of at his own abode this fortnight. By his hostess's anxious enquiries I must suspect he has outstay'd the stay-maker's patience. Meantime where are my Books?

Written in confusion from my Inn in the Temple, surrounded by mother, daughter, brother and dog of the Fenwick breed, who have been incommoding me night and day for a week. Mary has been staying at Capt. Burney's 3 or 4 days for quiet; I am in a [? pure] West Indian fever.

Can you understand these dark sayings?—Kind remembrance to Mr. M. and Miss B. How is thy nose? do styptics flourish?

Thine, without the advantage of solitude

C. LAMB.

I suppose you understand by the foregoing that we come to Hammersmith the Sunday after; not tomorrow.

[In spite of Lamb's reference to November fogs, which may merely have described their precociousness, I have dated this early October, because we

know, from a letter in *The Fate of the Fenwicks*, that the Fenwicks were then staying at Lamb's: Eliza Fenwick, the mother, Eliza, the daughter, Orlando, the son, and a dog. Eliza the daughter, who had become an actress, was on the point of sailing to the West Indies. By the 13th she had gone.

The lecturer was Coleridge, now in the throes of preparing the course on Shakespeare and other poets, and staying in London, presumably at a stay-maker's, for that purpose.

Although there is no mention of the circumstance in Lamb's letters, Robert Lloyd died on 26th October of this year, 1811, and Lamb wrote a memorial notice of him in the *Gentleman's Magazine* which will be found in vol. i of my edition of the *Works*. Charles Lloyd, writing to Robert's widow, said of Lamb: 'If I loved him for nothing else, I should now love [him] for the affecting interest that he has taken in the memory of my dearest Brother and Friend.']

248. TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: *17th November 1811*.]

DEAR MISS B.,

I send you three Tickets which will serve the first course of C.'s Lectures, six in number, the first begins tomorrow. Excuse the cover being not *oo fa*, is not that French? I have no writing paper.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

N.B. It is my present, not C.'s, id est he gave 'em me, I you.

[Coleridge's first lecture was given on 18th November 1811. Of course Lamb's letter may refer to one of the later courses, but this is the more probable date.

On 5th December 1811 Crabb Robinson met Coleridge at Lamb's; and on the 10th Miss Lamb dined with him and later in the evening Lamb, Manning, and Mrs. Fenwick came in. Lamb talked very shrewdly about Shakespeare's tragedies.

On 15th December Robinson was at Lamb's, and Mrs. Godwin was of the party. On coming away she took Robinson into another room and reproached him angrily for not hearing anything from Godwin, but taking everything from Lamb.

On 17th January 1812 Crabb Robinson met, at Barron Field's, Lamb and Leigh Hunt, when the conversation turned on the transcendent merits of Coleridge, which Lamb, sober or tipsy, upheld.

I should say here that Leigh Hunt's *Reflector*, after only three numbers, perished and he was now editing the *Examiner*, to which Lamb contributed occasional pieces in prose and verse. It was an article by Hunt himself, ridiculing and

censoring the Prince Regent, which led to his imprisonment in the spring of 1813, but Lamb's own caustic lines 'The Triumph of the Whale' in the number for 15th March 1812 were perhaps contributory. All through Hunt's imprisonment, two years, he was allowed to edit the *Examiner*.

During Hunt's imprisonment Lamb was a constant visitor, as Hunt, writing as 'Harry Brown' in the *Examiner* on 25th August, 1816, records in a poem to his friend, from which I quote the opening lines:

> O thou, whom Old Homer would call, were he living,
> Home-lover, thought-feeder, abundant-joke-giving;
> Whose charity springs from deep knowledge, nor swerves
> Into mere self-reflections, or scornful reserves;
> In short, who were made for two centuries ago,
> When Shakespeare drew men, and to write was to know;
> You'll not be surprised that I can't walk the streets,
> Without thinking of you and your visiting feats,
> When you call to remembrance how you and one more,
> When I wanted it most, used to knock at my door.

Copied from *Charles Lamb : His Life recorded by his Contemporaries*, compiled by Edmund Blunden.]

249. TO CHARLES LLOYD, SEN.

India House, *Tuesday, 8 Sep., 1812.*

DEAR SIR,

I return you thanks for your little Book. I am no great Latinist, but you appear to me to have very happily caught the Horatian manner. Some of them I had seen before. What gave me most satisfaction has been the 14th Epistle (its easy and Gentlemanlike beginning, particularly), and perhaps next to that, the Epistle to Augustus, which reads well even after Pope's delightful Imitation of it. What I think the least finish'd is the 18th Epistle. It is a metre which never gave me much pleasure. I like your *eight* syllable verses very much. They suit the Epistolary style quite as well as the *ten*. I am only sorry not to find the Satires in the same volume. I hope we may expect them. I proceed to find some few oversights, if you will indulge me, or what seem so to me, for I have neglected my Latin (and quite lost my Greek) since I left construing it at School. I will take them as I find them mark'd in order.

Let me only add that I hope you will continue an employment which must have been so delightful to you. That it may have

the power of stealing you occasionally from some sad thoughts is my fervent wish and hope. Pray, Dear Sir, give my kindest remembrances to Mrs. Lloyd, and to Plumstead—I am afraid I can add no more who are likely to remember me. Charles and I sometimes correspond. He is a letter in my debt. [*The remainder of the letter is torn away.*]

[The first of Lamb's criticisms refers to a passage in the sixth Epistle (Book i), 'To Numicius':

Virtutem verba putas et
Lucum ligna?

which Mr. Lloyd had rendered thus:

Think'st thou that virtue is composed of words,
As some men think a grove composed of boards?

Lamb objected: 'I do not quite like rendering *ligna, boards.* I take the passage to allude to the religious character of their groves, and that Horace means to say, If you are one who think virtue to be mere words, and account no more of a grove (that is, of a consecrated place) than of so much timber.—As I should say, if you look upon a Church as only so much brick and mortar, i.e. divested of its sacred character. I don't know if I am right—but *boards* sound awkward to me: *timber* I think should be the word. Timber is a word we apply to wood dead or alive. Boards only to the dead wood.'

The next reference is to the seventh Epistle (Book i), 'To Mæcenas.' Mr. Lloyd had converted Horace's

Dum pueris omnis pater et matercula pallet,
Officiosaque sedulitas et opella forensis
Adducit febres et testamenta resignat

to

Now fathers and mothers are pale for their boys,
And the forum's engagements, its bustle and noise,
And officious attention, together combine
To bring fevers, which cause us our wills to resign.

Lamb wrote: '*Our wills to resign* is literally the rendering of *testamenta resignare* —and would it not also as aptly apply to *voluntates deponere?* The resignation of the will in an hour of sickness gives one a Christian idea. At all events, resign should have been written re-sign, which would have precluded the Ambiguity.'

Again, Mr. Lloyd thus opened the Epistle to Aristius Fuscus (Book i. 10):

We who a country life enjoy,
Whom rural pleasures never cloy,
Wish health and peace may always crown
Our Fuscus, who prefers the town;
For tho' in this we disagree,
We feel like twins a sympathy

In other things;—what one refuses,
The other does, and so he chooses;
Of the old Dove thou keep'st the nest
While I (and think myself more blest)
Extol the scenes which nature yields,
Rivers which flow thro' verdant fields,

and so on. Lamb commented: '"Of the old dove thou keep'st the nest." Turning to the original, I find it "vetuli notique columbi, *Tu* nidum servas, *ego*," &c., which I have always translated a pair of old and well acquainted Doves, one of us (*you*) keep to your nest, the other (*I*) praise the Country. I have always taken columbi to be plural and to refer to *Tu et ego*. Referring to Creech, I find he translates it as I would.'

In translating 'Libertino natum patre' in the Epistle 'To His Book' (Book i. 20), Mr. Lloyd had written: 'From a father libertine descended.' Lamb demurred to this: 'I don't know whether *libertine* in our unhappy perversion of the meaning would be any great compliment to the memory of a parent. In English it always means a person of loose morals, though by transposing the order of the words you have perhaps obviated the objection. A *libertine father* would have shock'd the ear. The transposition leads us to the Latin meaning, by making us pause a little. I believe this is a foolish objection.'

Lamb continued: 'You have two or three times translated "solennis" by "solemn." Has not the English word acquired a gravity and religion, which the Latin did not intend?' Lamb then cited two instances. One was in the Epistle 'To Mæcenas' (Book i. 1), where the translator rendered 'Insanire putas solemnia me' 'Thou think'st me then quite solemnly unsound.' Lamb commented thus: '"Solemnly unsound" Does "solemnia insanire" mean anything more than to be mad with leave of custom—to be orderly or warrantably mad?'

The other instance was in the Epistle 'To Augustus' (Book ii. 1), where

Romæ dulce diu fuit et solemne reclusa
Mane domo vigilare

became

'Twas long a custom sanctioned at Rome,
To spend the morning solemnly at home.

Lamb remarked: '"To spend the morning solemnly at home." Does "solemne fuit" mean anything more than that it was customary or habitual with them to stay at home? Our *solemn* is applied only *directly* to forms of religious or grave occasions, as a solemn hymn or funeral; and *indirectly* or ironically to grave stupid people—as a solemn coxcomb—which latter I am afraid you will think me for being so verbose on a trifling objection.'

One other correction. Mr. Lloyd, in the same Epistle, had rendered 'socco' 'buskins.' Lamb pointed out: 'It should have been rendered by the word *sock*, which refers to Comedy. The Cothurnus or Buskin was the high-rais'd shoe of the *tragic* actor.'

Mr. Vernon Rendall remarks that modern scholars would accept most of Lamb's views.]

250. TO JOHN DYER COLLIER

[No date: probably *1812*.]

DEAR SIR,

Mrs. Collier has been kind enough to say that you would endeavour to procure a reporter's situation for W. Hazlitt. I went to consult him upon it last night, and he acceded very eagerly to the proposal, and requests me to say how very much obliged he feels to your kindness, and how glad he should be for its success. He is, indeed, at his wits' end for a livelihood; and, I should think, especially qualified for such an employment, from his singular facility in retaining all conversations at which he has been ever present. I think you may recommend him with confidence. I am sure I shall *myself* be obliged to you for your exertions, having a great regard for him.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Sunday morning.

[John Payne Collier, who prints this in his *Old Man's Diary*, adds: 'The result was that my father procured for Hazlitt the situation of a parliamentary reporter on the *Morning Chronicle*; but he did not retain it long, and as his talents were undoubted, Mr. Perry transferred to him the office of theatrical critic, a position which was subsequently held for several years by a person of much inferior talents.'

Crabb Robinson mentions in his *Diary* under the date 24th December 1812, that Hazlitt is in high spirits from his engagement with Perry as parliamentary reporter at four guineas a week.

I place here, not having any definite date, a letter on a kindred subject from Mary Lamb.]

251. MARY LAMB TO MRS. JOHN DYER COLLIER

[No date.]

DEAR MRS. C.,

This note will be given to you by a young friend of mine, whom I wish you would employ: she has commenced business as a mantua-maker, and, if you and my girls would try her, I think she could fit you all three, and it will be doing her an essential service. She is, I think, very deserving, and if you procure work

for her among your friends and acquaintances, so much the better. My best love to you and my girls. We are both well.

Yours affectionately,

MARY LAMB.

[John Payne Collier remarks: 'Southey and Coleridge, as is well known, married two sisters of the name of Fricker. I never saw either of them, but a third sister settled as a mantua-maker in London, and for some years she worked for my mother and her daughters. She was an intelligent woman, but by no means above her business, though she was fond of talking of her two poet-married relations. She was introduced to my mother by the following note from Mary Lamb, who always spoke of my sisters as *her* girls.'

Mary Lamb had herself worked as a mantua-maker for some years previous to the autumn of 1796.

On 30th December 1813 Crabb Robinson played a rubber of whist at Lamb's and then went with Lamb and Burney (father or son is not specified) to Rickman's, where they found Hazlitt. 'Rickman produced one of Chatterton's forgeries. In one manuscript there were seventeen different kinds of e's. "Oh," said Lamb (quoting Pope), "that must have been written by one of the

"Mob of gentlemen who wrote with ease."'

That this was a very cold winter we know from a note to Leigh Hunt's lines *To C. L.*, already quoted in part, stating that in all weathers, 'even in the dreadful frost and snow at the beginning of 1814,' Lamb came to his prison to comfort him.

Lamb continued to write for the *Examiner* until the end of 1813. The next letter paves the way to his most valuable journalistic enterprise, the *Elia* essays, which, although they did not begin until 1820, might never have found form but for John Scott (1783–1821) to whom the letter is addressed, who had just become editor of the *Champion*, and as such seems to have invited Lamb to contribute. He came to know Lamb probably through Leigh Hunt, by whom he had been encouraged. Scott became, in the *London Magazine*, an editor of genius, detecting merit in many writers afterwards to become famous, and his early death was a literary tragedy.]

252. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN SCOTT

[P.M. (*? February*) *1814.*]

SIR,

Your explanation is perfectly pleasant to me, and I accede to your proposal most willingly.

As I began with the beginning of this month, I will if you please call upon you for *your part of the engagement* (supposing I shall have performed mine) on the 1st of March next, and thence forward

if it suit you quarterly.—You will occasionally wink at BRISKETS & VEINY PIECES.

Your hble. Svt.

C. LAMB.

Saturday.

[Lamb's only contribution to the *Champion* under Scott which can be identified is the essay 'On the Melancholy of Tailors,' but there is little doubt that he supplied many of the extracts from old authors which were printed from time to time, and possibly one or two comic letters also.

See the letter of 12th December 1814.

On 28th May 1814 Crabb Robinson went with the Colliers and the Lambs to Dr. Aikin's.

On 3rd July 1814 Crabb Robinson took Lamb to Enfield, to his friend Anthony Robinson's, and in the evening walked back. This excursion is interesting as, so far as we know, being Lamb's first acquaintance with the village that he was to like so much, and later to make his home in for several years.

With the next letter Lamb's last epistolary period may be said to begin.]

253. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[Dated at end: *9th August 1814.*]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I cannot tell you how pleased I was at the receit of the great Armful of Poetry which you have sent me, and to get it before the rest of the world too! I have gone quite through with it, and was thinking to have accomplished that pleasure a second time before I wrote to thank you, but M. Burney came in the night (while we were out) and made holy theft of it, but we expect restitution in a day or two. It is the noblest conversational poem I ever read. A day in heaven. The part (or rather main body) which has left the sweetest odour on my memory (a bad term for the remains of an impression so recent) is the Tales of the Church yard. The only girl among seven brethren, born out of due time and not duly taken away again—the deaf man and the blind man—the Jacobite and the Hanoverian whom antipathies reconcile—the Scarron-entry of the rusticating parson upon his solitude—these were all new to me too. My having known the story of Margaret (at the beginning), a very old acquaintance, even as long back as I saw you first at Stowey, did

not make her reappearance less fresh. I don't know what to pick out of this Best of Books upon the best subjects for partial naming.

That gorgeous Sunset is famous, I think it must have been the identical one we saw on Salisbury plain five years ago, that drew Phillips from the card table where he had sat from rise of that luminary to its unequall'd set, but neither he nor I had gifted eyes to see those symbols of common things glorified such as the prophets saw them, in that sunset—the wheel—the potter's clay —the wash pot—the wine press—the almond tree rod—the baskets of figs—the fourfold visaged head, the throne and him that sat thereon.

One feeling I was particularly struck with as what I recognised so very lately at Harrow Church on entering in it after a hot and secular day's pleasure,—the instantaneous coolness and calming, almost transforming, properties of a country church just entered —a certain fragrance which it has—either from its holiness, or being kept shut all the week, or the air that is let in being pure country—exactly what you have reduced into words but I am feeling I cannot. The reading your lines about it fixed me for a time, a monument, in Harrow Church, (do you know it?) with its fine long Spire white as washd marble, to be seen by vantage of its high scite as far as Salisbury spire itself almost—

I shall select a day or two very shortly when I am coolest in brain to have a steady second reading, which I feel will lead to many more, for it will be a stock book with me while eyes or spectacles shall be lent me.

There is a deal of noble matter about mountain scenery, yet not so much as to overpower and discountenance a poor Londoner or South country man entirely, though Mary seems to have felt it occasionally a little too powerfully, for it was her remark during reading it that by your system it was doubtful whether a Liver in Towns had a Soul to be Saved. She almost trembled for that invisible part of us in her.

Save for a late excursion to Harrow and a day or two on the banks of the Thames this Summer, rural images were fast fading from my mind, and by the wise provision of the Regent all that was countryfy'd in the Parks is all but obliterated. The very colour of green is vanishd, the whole surface of Hyde Park is dry crumbling sand (Arabia Arenosa), not a vestige or hint of grass

ever having grown there, booths and drinking places go all round it for a mile and half I am confident—I might say two miles in circuit—the stench of liquors, *bad* tobacco, dirty people and provisions, conquers the air and we are stifled and suffocated in Hyde Park.

Order after Order has been issued by Ld. Sidmouth in the name of the Regent (acting in behalf of his Royal father) for the dispersion of the varlets, but in vain. The vis unita of all the Publicans in London, Westmr., Marybone, and miles round is too powerful a force to put down. The Regent has rais'd a phantom which he cannot lay. There they'll stay probably for ever. The whole beauty of the Place is gone—that lake-look of the Serpentine—it has got foolish ships upon it—but something whispers to have confidence in nature and its revival—

> at the coming of the *milder day*
> These monuments shall all be overgrown.

Meantime I confess to have smoked one delicious Pipe in one of the cleanliest and goodliest of the booths—a tent rather, 'O call it not a booth!'—erected by the public Spirit of Watson, who keeps the Adam and Eve at Pancras (the ale houses have all emigrated with their train of bottles, mugs, corkscrews, waiters, into Hyde Park—whole Ale houses with all their Ale!) in company with some of the guards that had been in France and a fine French girl (habited like a Princess of Banditti) which one of the dogs had transported from the Garonne to the Serpentine. The unusual scene, in H. Park, by Candlelight in open air, good tobacco, bottled stout, made it look like an interval in a campaign, a repose after battle, I almost fancied scars smarting and was ready to club a story with my comrades of some of my lying deeds.

After all, the fireworks were splendent—the Rockets in clusters, in trees and all shapes, spreading about like young stars in the making, floundering about in Space (like unbroke horses) till some of Newton's calculations should fix them, but then they went out. Any one who could see 'em and the still finer showers of gloomy rain fire that fell sulkily and angrily from 'em, and could go to bed without dreaming of the Last Day, must be as hardened an Atheist as ******.

Again let me thank you for your present and assure you that fireworks and triumphs have not distracted me from receiving a calm and noble enjoyment from it (which I trust I shall often), and I sincerely congratulate you on its appearance.

With kindest remembrances to you & household, we remain —yours sincerely

C. LAMB and sister.

9 Aug., 1814.

[Wordsworth had sent Lamb a copy of *The Excursion*, which had been published in July 1814. In connection with this letter Lamb's review of the poem in the *Quarterly* (see vol. i of my edition) should be read. Wordsworth's tales of the churchyard are in Books vi and vii. The story of Margaret had been written in 1795.

The 'sunset scene' (see letter of 19th September 1814) is at the end of Book ii. Lamb refers to his visit to Hazlitt at Winterslow, near Salisbury, in 1809, with Mary Lamb, Colonel Phillips, and Martin Burney. Wordsworth was not with them. This is the passage:

So was he lifted gently from the ground,
And with their freight homeward the shepherds moved
Through the dull mist, I following—when a step,
A single step, that freed me from the skirts
Of the blind vapour, opened to my view
Glory beyond all glory ever seen
By waking sense or by the dreaming soul!
The appearance, instantaneously disclosed,
Was of a mighty city—boldly say
A wilderness of building, sinking far
And self-withdrawn into a boundless depth,
Far sinking into splendour—without end!
Fabric it seemed of diamond and of gold,
With alabaster domes, and silver spires,
And blazing terrace upon terrace, high
Uplifted; here, serene pavilions bright,
In avenues disposed; there, towers begirt
With battlements that on their restless fronts
Bore stars—illumination of all gems!
By earthly nature had the effect been wrought
Upon the dark materials of the storm
Now pacified; on them, and on the coves
And mountain-steeps and summits, whereunto
The vapours had receded, taking there
Their station under a cerulean sky,
Oh, 'twas an unimaginable sight!
Clouds, mists, streams, watery rocks and emerald turf,

Clouds of all tincture, rocks and sapphire sky,
Confused, commingled, mutually inflamed,
Molten together, and composing thus,
Each lost in each, that marvellous array
Of temple, palace, citadel, and huge
Fantastic pomp of structure without name,
In fleecy folds voluminous, enwrapped.
Right in the midst, where interspace appeared
Of open court, an object like a throne
Under a shining canopy of state
Stood fixed; and fixed resemblances were seen
To implements of ordinary use,
But vast in size, in substance glorified;
Such as by Hebrew Prophets were beheld
In vision—forms uncouth of mightiest power
For admiration and mysterious awe.

In August 1814 London was in a state of jubilation over the declaration of peace between England and France. Lord Sidmouth, late Mr. Addington, the Home Secretary, known as 'The Doctor,' was one of Lamb's butts in his political epigrams.

'At the coming of the milder day.' From Wordsworth's *Hart-leap Well.*

'* * * * * *.' I assume these six stars to stand for Godwin.]

254. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

13 August, 1814.

DEAR RESUSCITATE,

There comes to you by the vehicle from Lad Lane this day a volume of German; what it is I cannot justly say, the characters of those northern nations having been always singularly harsh and unpleasant to me. It is a contribution of Dr. Southey towards your wants, and you would have had it sooner but for an odd accident. I wrote for it three days ago, and the Dr., as he thought, sent it me. A book of like exterior he did send, but being disclosed, how far unlike. It was the *Well-bred Scholar,*—a book with which it seems the Dr. laudably fills up those hours which he can steal from his medical avocations. Chesterfield, Blair, Beattie, portions from 'The Life of Savage,' make up a prettyish system of morality and the Belles Lettres, which Mr. Mylne, a Schoolmaster, has properly brought together, and calls the collection by the denomination above mentioned. The

Doctor had no sooner discovered his error than he despatched man and horse to rectify the mistake, and with a pretty kind of ingenuous modesty in his note seemeth to deny any knowledge of the *Well-bred Scholar;* false modesty surely and a blush misplaced; for, what more pleasing than the consideration of professional austerity thus relaxing, thus improving; but so, when a child I remember blushing, being caught on my knees to my maker, or doing otherwise some pious and praiseworthy action; *now* I rather love such things to be seen.

Henry Crabb Robinson is out upon his circuit, and his books are inaccessible without his leave and key. He is attending the Midland Circuit,—a short term, but to him, as to many young Lawyers, a long vacation sufficiently dreary. I thought I could do no better than transmit to him, not extracts, but your very letter itself, than which I think I never read any thing more moving, more pathetic, or more conducive to the purpose of persuasion. The Crab is a sour Crab if it does not sweeten him. I think it would draw another third volume of Dodsley out of me; but you say you don't want any English books? Perhaps, after all, that's as well; one's romantic credulity is for ever misleading one into misplaced acts of foolery. Crab might have answered by this time: his juices take a long time supplying, but they'll run at last,—I know they will,—pure golden pippin. His address is at T. Robinson's, Bury, and if on Circuit, to be forwarded immediately — such my peremptory superscription. A fearful rumour has since reached me that the Crab is on the eve of setting out for France. If he is in England, your letter will reach him, and I flatter myself a touch of the persuasive of my own, which accompanies it, will not be thrown away; if it be, he is a Sloe, and no true-hearted crab, and there's an end. For that life of the German Conjuror which you speak of, 'Colerus de Vitâ Doctoris vix-Intelligibilis,' I perfectly remember the last evening we spent with Mrs. Morgan and Miss Brent, in London-Street,—(by that token we had raw rabbits for supper, and Miss Brent prevailed upon me to take a glass of brandy and water after supper, which is not my habit,)—I perfectly remember reading portions of that life in their parlour, and I think it must be among their Packages. It was the very last evening we were at that house. What is gone of that frank-hearted circle, Morgan

and his cos-lettuces? He ate walnuts better than any man I ever knew. Friendships in these parts stagnate.

One piece of news I know will give you pleasure—Rickman is made a Clerk to the House of Commons, £2000 a year with greater expectat^ns—but that is not the news—but it is that poor card-playing Phillips, that has felt himself for so many years the outcast of Fortune, which feeling pervaded his very intellect, till it made the destiny it feared, withering his hopes in the great and little games of life—by favor of the single star that ever shone upon him since his birth, has strangely stept into Rickman's Secretaryship—sword, bag, House and all—from a hopeless £100 a year eaten up beforehand with desperate debts, to a clear £400 or £500—it almost reconciles me to the belief of a moral government of the world—the man stares and gapes and seems to be always wondering at what has befaln him—he tries to be eager at Cribbage, but alas! the source of that Interest is dried up for ever, he no longer plays for his next day's meal, or to determine whether he shall have a half dinner or a whole dinner, whether he shall buy a pair of black silk stockings, or wax his old ones a week or two longer, the poor man's relish of a Trump, the Four Honors, is gone—and I do not know whether if we could get at the bottom of things whether poor star-doomed Phillips with his hair staring with despair was not a happier being than the sleek well combed oily-pated Secretary that has succeeded. The gift is, however, clogged with one stipulation, that the Secretary is to remain a Single Man. Here I smell Rickman. Thus are gone at once all Phillips' matrimonial dreams. Those verses which he wrote himself, and those which a superior pen (with modesty let me speak as I name no names) endited for him to Elisa, Amelia &c.—for Phillips was a wife-hunting, probably from the circumstance of his having formed an extreme rash connection in early life which paved the way to all his after misfortunes, but there is an obstinacy in human nature which such accidents only serve to whet on to try again. Pleasure thus at two entrances quite shut out—I hardly know how to determine of Phillips's result of happiness. He appears satisfyd, but never those bursts of gaiety, those moment-rules from the Cave of Despondency, that used to make his face shine and shew the lines which care had marked in it. I would bet an even wager he

marries secretly, the Speaker finds it out, and he is reverted to his old Liberty and a hundred pounds a year—these are but speculations—I can think of no other news.

I am going to eat Turbot, Turtle, Venison, marrow pudding—cold punch, claret, madeira,—at our annual feast at half-past four this day. Mary has ordered the bolt to my bedroom door inside to be taken off, and a practicable latch to be put on, that I may not bar myself in and be suffocated by my neckcloth, so we have taken all precautions, three watchmen are engaged to carry the body upstairs—Pray for me. They keep bothering me, (I'm at office,) and my ideas are confused. Let me know if I can be of any service as to books. God forbid the Architectonicon should be sacrificed to a foolish scruple of some Book-proprietor, as if books did not belong with the highest propriety to those that understand 'em best.

C. LAMB.

[Since Lamb's last letter to him (30th October 1809) Coleridge had done very little. The *Friend* had been given up; he had made his London home with the Morgans; had delivered the lectures on Shakespeare and contributed to the *Courier*; *Remorse* had been produced with Lamb's prologue, 23rd January 1813; the quarrel with Wordsworth had been to some extent healed; he had sold his German books; and the opium-habit was growing on him. He was now at Bristol, living with Joseph Wade, and meditating a great work on Christianity which Cottle was to print, and which ultimately became the *Biographia Literaria*.

The term 'Resuscitate' may refer to one of Coleridge's frequent threats of dying.

Dr. Henry Herbert Southey (1783–1865) was brother of the poet. He had just settled in London.

'Mylne' was William Milns, author of *The Well-bred Scholar*, 1794.

Crabb Robinson does not mention Coleridge's letter, nor make any reference to it, in his *Diary*. He went to France in August after circuit. It was at this time (23rd August) that Coleridge wrote to John Murray concerning a translation of Goethe's *Faust*, which Murray contemplated (see *Letters*, E. H. Coleridge, page 624). The suggestion that Coleridge should translate *Faust* for Murray came via Crabb Robinson via Lamb.

The 'life of the German conjuror.' There were several Coleruses. John Colerus of Amsterdam wrote a Life of Spinoza. Lamb may have meant this. John Colerus of Berlin invented a perpetual calendar and John Jacob Colerus examined Platonic doctrine. There are still others.

The Morgans had moved to Ashley, near Box. Miss Brent was Mrs. Morgan's sister.

Phillips we have met: an old dependant of Rickman and friend of the

Burneys. It is a calamity that Lamb's amatory efforts for this later Miles Standish do not exist.

'Our annual feast.' The annual dinner of the India House clerks.

'The Architectonicon.' Lamb refers possibly to some great projected work of Coleridge's. Goethe may be referred to.]

255. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

26th August, 1814.

Let the hungry soul rejoice: there is corn in Egypt. Whatever thou hast been told to the contrary by designing friends, who perhaps inquired carelessly, or did not inquire at all, in hope of saving their money, there is a stock of 'Remorse' on hand, enough, as Pople conjectures, for seven years' consumption; judging from experience of the last two years. Methinks it makes for the benefit of sound literature, that the best books do not always go off best. Inquire in seven years' time for the 'Rokebys' and the 'Laras,' and where shall they be found?—fluttering fragmentally in some thread-paper—whereas thy 'Wallenstein' and thy 'Remorse' are safe on Longman's or Pople's shelves, as in some Bodleian; there they shall remain; no need of a chain to hold them fast—perhaps for ages—tall copies—and people shan't run about hunting for them as in old Ezra's shrievalty they did for a Bible, almost without effect till the great-great-grand-niece (by the mother's side) of Jeremiah or Ezekiel (which was it?) remembered something of a book, with odd reading in it, that used to lie in the green closet in her aunt Judith's bedchamber.

Thy caterer Price was at Hamburgh when last Pople heard of him, laying up for thee, like some miserly old father for his generous-hearted son to squander.

Mr. Charles Aders, whose books also pant for that free circulation which thy custody is sure to give them, is to be heard of at his kinsmen, Messrs. Jameson and Aders, No. 7, Laurence-Pountney-Lane, London, according to the information which Crabius with his parting breath left me. Crabius is gone to Paris. I prophesy he and the Parisians will part with mutual contempt. His head has a twist Alemagne, like thine, dear mystic.

I have been reading Madame Stael on Germany. An impudent clever woman. But if 'Faust' be no better than in her abstract

of it, I counsel thee to let it alone. How canst thou translate the language of cat-monkeys? Fie on such fantasies! But I will not forget to look for Proclus. It is a kind of book which when one meets with it one shuts the lid faster than one opened it. Yet I have some bastard kind of recollection that somewhere, some time ago, upon some stall or other, I saw it. It was either that or Plotinus, 205–270 A.D., Neoplatonist, or Saint Augustine's 'City of God.' So little do some folks value, what to others, *sc.* to you, 'well used,' had been the 'Pledge of Immortality.' Bishop Bruno I never touched upon. Stuffing too good for the brains of such 'a Hare' as thou describest. May it burst his pericranium, as the gobbets of fat and turpentine (a nasty thought of the seer) did that old dragon in the Apocrypha! May he go mad in trying to understand his author! May he lend the third volume of him before he has quite translated the second, to a friend who shall lose it, and so spoil the publication; and may his friend find it and send it him just as thou or some such less dilatory spirit shall have announced the whole for the press; lastly, may he be hunted by Reviewers, and the devil jug him! So I think I have answered all the questions except about Morgan's cos-lettuces. The first personal peculiarity I ever observed of him (all worthy souls are subject to 'em) was a particular kind of rabbit-like delight in munching salads with oil without vinegar after dinner—a steady contemplative browsing on them —didst never take note of it? Canst think of any other queries in the solution of which I can give thee satisfaction? Do you want any books that I can procure for you? Old Jimmy Boyer is dead at last. Trollope has got his living, worth £1000 a-year net. See, thou sluggard, thou heretic-sluggard, what mightest thou not have arrived at! Lay thy animosity against Jimmy in the grave. Do not *entail* it on thy posterity.

CHARLES LAMB.

[Coleridge's play *Remorse* had been published by Pople in 1813. A copy of the first edition now brings about thirty shillings; but this is largely owing to the presence in the volume of Lamb's prologue. But *Rokeby* and *Lara* bring their pounds too.

'Thy caterer Price' I do not identify.

Charles Aders we shall meet. Crabius was, of course, Crabb Robinson.

'Bishop Bruno.' Probably was the medieval bishop whose legend Southey narrated in a ballad. But the wide passage is now beyond annotation. Lamb

would have read Madame de Staël's *De l'Allemagne* in Murray's three-volume edition, translator not named, 1813.

I cannot place the 'Hare.' It seems hardly likely it was Julius Charles Hare, who was then only a youth of nineteen, although he afterwards came to know Coleridge.

'Jimmy Boyer.' The Rev. James Boyer, Head Master of Christ's Hospital in Lamb and Coleridge's day, died in July or August 1814. His living, the richest in the Hospital's gift, was that of Colne Engaine, which passed to the Rev. Arthur William Trollope, Head Master of Christ's Hospital until 1826. Boyer had been a Draconian, and Coleridge and he had had passages, but in the main Coleridge's testimony to him is favourable and kindly (see Lamb's Christ's Hospital essay in *Elia* and, even better, Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*.)]

256. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. illegible. *19th September 1814.*]

MY DEAR W.,

I have scarce time or quiet to explain my present situation, how unquiet and distracted it is. . . . Owing to the absence of some of my compeers, and to the deficient state of payments at E. I. H. owing to bad peace speculations in the Calico market (I write this to W. W., Esq. Collector of Stamp duties for the conjoint northern counties, not to W. W. Poet) I go back, and have for this many days past, to evening work, generally at the rate of nine hours a day. The nature of my work too, puzzling and hurrying, has so shaken my spirits, that my sleep is nothing but a succession of dreams of business I cannot do, of assistants that give me no assistance, of terrible responsibilities. I reclaimed your book, which Hazlit has uncivilly kept, only 2 days ago, and have made shift to read it again with shatterd brain. It does not lose—rather some parts have come out with a prominence I did not perceive before—but such was my aching head yesterday (Sunday) that the book was like a Mountn. Landscape to one that should walk on the edge of a precipice. I perceived beauty dizzily. Now what I would say is, that I see no prospect of a quiet half day or hour even till this week and the next are past. I then hope to get 4 weeks absence, and if *then* is time enough to begin I will most gladly do what you require, tho' I feel my inability, for my brain is always desultory and snatches off hints from things, but can seldom follow a 'work' methodically. But that shall be no excuse. What I beg you to do is to let me know from

Southey, if that will be time enough for the 'Quarterly,' i.e. suppose it done in 3 weeks from this date (19 Sept.): if not it is my bounden duty to express my regret, and decline it. Mary thanks you and feels highly grateful for your Patent of Nobility, and acknowleges the author of Excursion as the legitimate Fountain of Honor. We both agree, that to our feeling Ellen is best as she is. To us there would have been something repugnant in her challenging her Penance as a Dowry! the fact is explicable, but how few to whom it could have been renderd explicit!

The unlucky reason of the detention of Excursion was, Hazlit and we having a misunderstanding. He blowed us up about 6 months ago, since which the union hath snapt, but M. Burney borrowd it for him and after reiterated messages I only got it on Friday. His remarks had some vigor in them, particularly something about an old ruin being *too modern for your Primeval Nature, and about a lichen*, but I forget the Passage, but the whole wore a slovenly air of dispatch and disrespect. That objection which M. Burney had imbibed from him about Voltaire, I explained to M. B. (or tried) exactly on your principle of its being a characteristic speech. That it was no settled comparative estimate of Voltaire with any of his own tribe of buffoons—no injustice, even if *you* spoke it, for I dared say you never could relish Candide. I know I tried to get thro' it about a twelvemonth since, and couldn't for the Dullness. Now, I think I have a wider range in buffoonery than you. Too much toleration perhaps.

I finish this after a raw ill bakd dinner, fast gobbled up, to set me off to office again after working there till near four. O Christ! how I wish I were a rich man, even tho' I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting thro' that Needles eye that is spoken of in the *Written Word*. Apropos, are you a Xtian? or is it the Pedlar and the Priest that are?

I find I miscalld that celestial splendor of the mist going off, a *sunset*. That only shews my inaccuracy of head.

Do pray indulge me by writing an answer to the point of time mentioned above, or *let Southey*. I am asham'd to go bargaining in this way, but indeed I have no time I can reckon on till the 1st week in Octor. God send I may not be disappointed in that!

Coleridge swore in letter to me he would review Excn. in the Quarterly. Therefore, tho' *that* shall not stop me, yet if I can

do anything, *when* done, I must know of him if he has anything ready, or I shall fill the world with loud exclaims.

I keep writing on, knowing the Postage is no more for much writing, else so faggd & disjointed I am with damnd India house work, I scarce know what I do. My left arm reposes on 'Excursion.' I feel what it would be in quiet. It is now a sealed Book.

O happy Paris, seat of idleness and pleasure! From some return'd English I hear that not such a thing as a counting house is to be seen in her streets, scarce a desk—Earthquakes swallow up this mercantile city and its gripple merchants, as Drayton hath it, 'born to be the curse of this brave isle.' I invoke this not on account of any parsimonious habits the mercantile interest may have, but, to confess truth, because I am not fit for an office.

Farewell, in haste, from a head that is ill to methodize, a stomach to digest, and all out of Tune. Better harmonies await you. C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth had been appointed in 1813 Distributor of Stamps for the county of Westmorland. Lamb is writing again about *The Excursion*, which at the instigation of Southey, to whom Wordsworth had made the suggestion, he is to review for the *Quarterly*.

'Hazlit and we having a misunderstanding.' The precise cause of the trouble we do not know, but in Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, in 1811, it is said that a slight coolness had begun between the two men on account of money which Lamb did not feel justified in lending to Hazlitt. Between 1811 and 1814, however, they were friendly again. It was Hazlitt's hostile attitude to Wordsworth that brought about Robinson's split with him, although that also was mended: literary men are short haters. Hazlitt reviewed *The Excursion* —from Lamb's copy, which in itself was a cause of grievance—in the *Examiner*, in three numbers, 21st, 28th August and 2nd October. Wordsworth had described *Candide*, in Book ii, as the 'dull product of a scoffer's pen.' Hazlitt wrote thus:

> . . . We cannot however agree with Mr. Wordsworth that *Candide* is *dull*. It is, if our author pleases, 'the production of a scoffer's pen,' or it is anything but dull. *Rasselas* indeed is dull; but then it is privileged dulness. It may not be proper in a grave, discreet, orthodox, promising young divine, who studies his opinions in the contraction or distension of his patron's brow, to allow any merit to a work like *Candide*; but we conceive that it would have been more in character, that is, more manly, in Mr. Wordsworth, nor do we think it would have hurt the cause he espouses, if he had blotted out the epithet, after it had peevishly escaped him. Whatsoever savours of a little, narrow, inquisitorial spirit, does not sit well on a poet and a man of genius. The prejudices of a philosopher are not natural. . . .

Lamb himself made the same criticism, three years later, at Haydon's dinner party. In the *Elia* essay, 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading,' in 1822, he wrote: 'I should not care to be caught in the serious avenues of some cathedral alone and reading *Candide*.'

Hazlitt had also said of *The Excursion* that:

> Such is the severe simplicity of Mr. Wordsworth's taste, that we doubt whether he would not reject a druidical temple, or time-hallowed ruin, as too modern and artificial for his purpose. He only familiarises himself or his readers with a stone, covered with lichens, which has slept in the same spot of ground from the creation of the world, or with the rocky fissure between two mountains, caused by thunder, or with a cavern scooped out by the sea. His mind is, as it were, coeval with the primary forms of things, holds immediately from nature; and his imagination 'owes no allegiance' but 'to the elements.'

'Are you a Xtian?' Referring to the sentiments of the Wanderer and the Pastor —two characters of *The Excursion*. Thomas Allsop, whom we are soon to meet, records that he 'once wrote to Wordsworth to inquire if he was really a Christian. He replied: "When I am a good man *then* I am a Christian."'

'A *sunset*.' See preceding letter to Wordsworth.]

257. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

October 29 1814.

DEAR S.,

I have this day deposited with Mr. G. Bedfd. the Essay you suggested to me. I am afraid it is wretchedly inadequate. Who can cram into a strait coop of a review any serious idea of such a vast & magnifict poem as Excursn?

I am myself, too, peculiarly unfit from constitutional causes & want of time. However, it is gone.—

I have 9 or 10 days of my holy days left, but the rains are come.

Kind remembs to Mrs. S. & sisters.

Yours truly

C. L.

[Southey had asked Lamb to review Wordsworth's poem *The Excursion* for the *Quarterly*, then edited by William Gifford. Grosvenor Bedford was a friend of Southey. Later letters deal with this matter.]

258. MARY LAMB TO BARBARA BETHAM (Aged 14)

Novr. 2, 1814.

It is very long since I have met with such an agreeable surprise as the sight of your letter, my kind young friend, afforded me. Such a nice letter as it is too. And what a pretty hand you write. I congratulate you on this attainment with great pleasure, because I have so often felt the disadvantage of my own wretched handwriting.

You wish for London news. I rely upon your sister Ann for gratifying you in this respect, yet I have been endeavouring to recollect whom you might have seen here, and what may have happened to them since, and this effort has only brought the image of little Barbara Betham, unconnected with any other person, so strongly before my eyes that I seem as if I had no other subject to write upon. Now I think I see you with your feet propped upon the fender, your two hands spread out upon your knees—an attitude you always chose when we were in familiar confidential conversation together—telling me long stories of your own home, where now you say you are 'Moping on with the same thing every day,' and which then presented nothing but pleasant recollections to your mind. How well I remember your quiet steady face bent over your book. One day, conscience struck at having wasted so much of your precious time in reading, and feeling yourself, as you prettily said, 'quite useless to me,' you went to my drawers and hunted out some unhemmed pocket-handkerchiefs, and by no means could I prevail upon you to resume your story books till you had hemmed them all. I remember, too, your teaching my little maid to read—your sitting with her a whole evening to console her for the death of her sister; and that she in her turn endeavoured to become a comforter to you, the next evening, when you wept at the sight of Mrs. Holcroft, from whose school you had recently eloped because you were not partial to sitting in the stocks. Those tears, and a few you once dropped when my brother teased you about your supposed fondness for an apple dumpling, were the only interruptions to the calm contentedness of your unclouded brow. We still remain the same as you left us, neither taller nor wiser, or perceptibly older, but three years must have made

a great alteration in you. How very much, dear Barbara, I should like to see you!

We still live in Temple Lane, but I am now sitting in a room you never saw. Soon after you left us we we[re] distressed by the cries of a cat, which seemed to proceed from the garrets adjoining to ours, and only separated from ours by a locked door on the farther side of my brother's bedroom, which you know was the little room at the top of the kitchen stairs. We had the lock forced and let poor puss out from behind a pannel of the wainscot, and she lived with us from that time, for we were in gratitude bound to keep her, as she had introduced us to four untenanted, unowned rooms, and by degrees we have taken possession of these unclaimed apartments—First putting up lines to dry our clothes, then moving my brother's bed into one of these, more commodious than his own room. And last winter, my brother being unable to pursue a work he had begun, owing to the kind interruptions of friends who were more at leisure than himself, I persuaded him that he might write at his ease in one of these rooms, as he could not then hear the door knock, or hear himself denied to be at home, which was sure to make him call out and convict the poor maid in a fib. Here, I said, he might be almost really not at home. So I put in an old grate, and made him a fire in the largest of these garrets, and carried in one table, and one chair, and bid him write away, and consider himself as much alone as if he were in a new lodging in the midst of Salisbury Plain, or any other wide unfrequented place where he could expect few visitors to break in upon his solitude. I left him quite delighted with his new acquisition, but in a few hours he came down again with a sadly dismal face. He could do nothing, he said, with those bare whitewashed walls before his eyes. He could not write in that dull unfurnished prison.

The next day, before he came home from his office, I had gathered up various bits of old carpetting to cover the floor; and, to a little break the blank look of the bare walls, I hung up a few old prints that used to ornament the kitchen, and after dinner, with great boast of what an improvement I had made, I took Charles once more into his new study. A week of busy labours followed, in which I think you would not have disliked to have been our assistant. My brother and I almost covered the wall

with prints, for which purpose he cut out every print from every book in his old library, coming in every now and then to ask my leave to strip a fresh poor author—which he might not do, you know, without my permission, as I am elder sister. There was such pasting, such consultation where their portraits, and where the series of pictures from Ovid, Milton, and Shakespear would show to most advantage, and in what obscure corner authors of humbler note might be allowed to tell their stories. All the books gave up their stores but one, a translation from Ariosto, a delicious set of four and twenty prints, and for which I had marked out a conspicuous place; when lo! we found at the moment the scissars were going to work that a part of the poem was printed at the back of every picture. What a cruel disappointment! To conclude this long story about nothing, the poor despised garret is now called the print room, and is become our most favorite sitting room.

Your sister Ann will tell you that your friend Louisa is going to France. Miss Skepper is out of town, Mrs. Reynolds desires to be remembered to you, and so does my neighbour Mrs. Norris, who was your doctress when you were unwell, her three little children are grown three big children. The Lions still live in Exeter Change. Returning home through the Strand, I often hear them roar about twelve oclock at night. I never hear them without thinking of you, because you seemed so pleased with the sight of them, and said your young companions would stare when you told them you had seen a Lion.

And now my dear Barbara fare well, I have not written such a long letter a long time, but I am very sorry I had nothing amusing to write about. Wishing you may pass happily through the rest of your school days, and every future day of your life.

I remain, your affectionate Friend,

M. LAMB.

My brother sends his love to you, with the kind remembrance your letter shewed you have of us as I was. He joins with me in respects to your good father and mother, and to your brother John, who, if I do not mistake his name, is your tall young brother who was in search of a fair lady with a large fortune. Ask him if he has found her yet. You say you are not so tall as

Louisa—you must be, you cannot so degenerate from the rest of your family. Now you have begun, I shall hope to have the pleasure of hearing from [you] again. I shall always receive a letter from you with very great delight.

[This charming letter is to a younger sister of Matilda Betham.

The work which in 1814 drove Lamb into an empty room was probably the review of *The Excursion*, or it may have been something which came to naught. Beyond the essay on Tailors, and a few brief scraps for the *Champion*, he did practically nothing that has survived until some verses in 1818, a few criticisms in 1819, and in 1820 the first of the *Elia* essays for the *London Magazine*.

On 29th June 1814 Crabb Robinson mentions finding Lamb in this newly discovered room and his 'unusual delight' in decorating it.

Louisa was Louisa Holcroft, about to go to France with her mother and stepfather, James Kenney. Miss Skepper was Basil Montagu's stepdaughter, afterwards the wife of B. W. Procter (Barry Cornwall). Exeter Change, where there was a menagerie, was in the Strand. There is a further reference to the tallness of the Bethams in Lamb's letter to Landor in 1832. Matilda Betham records that Lamb said of Barbara that her face had 'more cloud and sunshine in it than any he knew.'

On 21st November 1814 Crabb Robinson spent the evening with Lamb discussing pictures and poetry.]

259. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN SCOTT (?)

November 28, 1814.

SIR,

I beg leave to offer you the accompanying essay (originally written for Mr. Hunt's 'Reflector,' but not published, owing to the stopping of that work). Should it suit you to pay for occasional trifles of this sort, at your common rate, I should perhaps trouble you sometimes. If not, I will send for the M.S. next week, and you will have the goodness to leave it out for that purpose.

I am, Sir, with respect

Your Hble Svt.

C. LAMB.

[John Scott (1783–1821) we shall meet later, in 1820, in connection with the *London Magazine*, which he edited until the fatal termination of his quarrel with *Blackwood's*. Scott had just become editor of the *Champion*.

Lamb's only contribution to the *Champion* under Scott, which can be identified, is the essay 'On the Melancholy of Tailors,' 4th December 1814, but there is little doubt that he supplied many of the extracts from old authors which were printed from time to time, and possibly one or two comic letters also.]

260. TO JOHN SCOTT (?)

12th December 1814.

SIR,

I am sorry to seem to go off my agreement, but very particular circumstances have happened to hinder my fulfillment of it at present. If any single Essays ever occur to me in future, you shall have the refusal of them. Meantime I beg you to consider the thing as at an end.

Yours,
with thanks & acknowlgnt

C. LAMB.

Monday ev: 12 Dec., 1814.

[See letter to Scott above.

Mary Lamb was taken ill some time between 11th and 19th December from over-tiring herself on an article on needlework, which will be found in my edition of the *Works*. Possibly this was what Lamb referred to. Also his work at the India House was becoming more exacting.]

261. TO LEIGH HUNT (?)

[No date: *1814*.]

DEAR H.

I understand you have got (or had) a snivelling methodistical adulteration of my Essay on Drunkenness. I wish very much to see it, to see how far Mr. Basil Montagu's Philanthropical Scoundrels have gone to make me a Sneak. There certainly was no crying 'Peccavi' in the 1st Draught.

Yours, though I seldom see you,

CH. LAMB.

[This letter of Lamb's, which I take to be written to Hunt rather than Hazlitt, refers to the second appearance of the *Confessions* in Basil Montagu's collection of arguments in favour of abstinence, *Some Enquiries into the Effects of Fermented Liquors*, 1814.

The first appearance of Lamb's 'Confessions of a Drunkard' paper was in a quarterly magazine entitled *The Philanthropist; or, Repository for Hints and Suggestions calculated to promote the Comfort and Happiness of Man*, vol. iii, No. IX, 1813. It was there unsigned and addressed 'To the Editor of the *Philanthropist*.' The editor of this magazine was William Allen (1770–1843), the Quaker, and his chief associate was James Mill, the father of John Stuart Mill. Lamb's friend, Basil Montagu (1770–1851), was among the contributors; and another prominent name was that of Benjamin Meggot Forster (1764–1829),

who, like Montagu, opposed capital punishment and was zealous in the cause of chimney-sweepers.

In its original *Philanthropist* form the essay differs from its later appearances. Concerning the differences I should like to quote from an interesting article by the late Thomas Hutchinson in the *Athenæum* of 16th August 1902:

> The text of the 'Confessions,' as it stands in the *Philanthropist*, bears evident traces of Mill's editorial hand; the verbal changes smack of those precise and literal modes of thought and expression which Lamb found so uncongenial in the Scotsman. 'They seemed to have something noble *about* them,' writes Lamb of the friends of 1801. 'But moral qualities are not external to us, they are resident *in* us,' objects Mill; and so 'about' is struck out and 'in' substituted. 'Avoid the bottle as you would fly your greatest destruction,' says Lamb. 'But,' interposes the precisian, 'the idea of *destruction* does not admit of *more* or *less*; besides, "to fly" is properly a verb intransitive' —and thus the sentence is rewritten: '. . . fly *from certain* destruction.' 'The pain of the self-denial is *all one*'—'is *equal*,' substitutes the Scot. 'I scarce knew what it was to *ail anything*'—'to have an ailment,' corrects the lover of plain words; and so on. Of the sixth paragraph of the essay only the opening sentence ('Why should I hesitate,' etc.) is suffered to stand. The rest is cancelled—doubtless as at variance with Utilitarian views. Again, the close of the fourteenth paragraph ('But he is too hard for us,' etc., onwards) is struck out—either by Mill, as too broadly implying the existence of the 'muckle deil,' or by Allen, as too flippant an allusion to that fearsome personage. Lastly, the second paragraph is wanting and the third reduced by half, the conclusion (from 'Trample not,' etc., on), in which the miracle of the raising of Lazarus is referred to, being omitted.

The curious thing is that Montagu should have been able to take away the original MS. from the *Philanthropist* office. As a matter of fact, the version that is nearest to the 'Confessions' as Lamb wrote them is the second.]

262. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *28th December 1814.*]

DEAR W.,

Your experience about tailors seems to be in point blank opposition to Burton, as much as the author of the Excursion does toto cœlo differ in his notion of a country life from the picture which W. H. has exhibited of the same. But with a little explanation you and B. may be reconciled. It is evident that he confined his observations to the genuine native London tailor. What freaks Tailor-nature may take in the country is not for him to give account of. And certainly some of the freaks recorded do give an idea of the persons in question being beside

themselves, rather than in harmony with the common moderate self enjoymt. of the rest of mankind. A flying tailor, I venture to say, is no more in rerum naturâ than a flying horse or a Gryphon. His wheeling his airy flight from the precipice you mention had a parallel in the melancholy Jew who toppled from the monument. Were his limbs ever found? Then, the man who cures diseases by words is evidently an inspired tailor. Burton never affirmed that the act of sewing disqualified the practiser of it from being a fit organ for supernatural revelation. He never enters into such subjects. 'Tis the common uninspired tailor which he speaks of. Again the person who makes his smile to be *heard*, is evidently a man under possession; a demoniac taylor. A greater hell than his own must have a hand in this. I am not certain that the cause which you advocate has much reason for triumph. You seem to me to substitute light headedness for light heartedness by a trick, or not to know the difference. I confess, a grinning tailor would shock me.—Enough of tailors.—

The ''scapes' of the great god Pan who appeared among your mountains some dozen years since, and his narrow chance of being submerged by the swains, afforded me much pleasure. I can conceive the water nymphs pulling for him. He would have been another Hylas. W. Hylas. In a mad letter which Capel Loft wrote to M. M. Phillips (now Sr Richd.) I remember his noticing a metaphysical article by Pan, signed H. and adding 'I take your correspondent to be the same with Hylas.' Hylas has [? had] put forth a pastoral just before. How near the unfounded conjecture of the certainly inspired Loft (unfounded as we thought it) was to being realized! I can conceive him being 'good to all that wander in that perilous flood.' One J. Scott (I know no more) is editr. of *Champn*.

Where is Coleridge?

That Review you speak of, I am only sorry it did not appear last month. The circumstances of haste and peculiar bad spirits under which it was written, would have excused its slightness and inadequacy, the full load of which I shall suffer from its lying by so long as it will seem to have done from its postponement. I write with great difficulty and can scarce command my own resolution to sit at writing an hour together. I am a poor creature, but I am leaving off Gin. I hope you will see good will

in the thing. I had a difficulty to perform not to make it all Panegyrick; I have attempted to personate a mere stranger to you; perhaps with too much strangeness. But you must bear that in mind when you read it, and not think that I am in mind distant from you or your Poem, but that both are close to me among the nearest of persons and things. I do but act the stranger in the Review. Then, I was puzzled about extracts and determined upon not giving one that had been in the Examiner, for Extracts repeated give an idea that there is a meagre allowce. of good things. By this way, I deprived myself of Sr. W. Irthing and the reflections that conclude his story, which are the flower of the Poem. H. had given the reflections before me. *Then* it is the first Review I ever did, and I did not know how long I might make it. But it must speak for itself, if Giffard and his crew do not put words in its mouth, which I expect. Farewell. Love to all. Mary keeps very bad.

C. LAMB.

[Lamb seems to have sent Wordsworth a copy of the *Champion* containing his essay, signed Burton, Junior, 'On the Melancholy of Tailors.' Wordsworth's letter of reply, containing the examples of other tailors, is no longer in existence. 'A greater hell' is a pun: the receptacle into which tailors throw scraps is called a hell. See Lamb's 'Satan in Search of a Wife' and notes (vol. iv of my edition of Lamb's *Works*) for more on this topic.

'W. H.' Hazlitt: referring again to his review of *The Excursion* in the *Examiner*.

'The melancholy Jew.' Mr. Lyon Levy, a diamond merchant, who jumped off the Monument commemorating the Fire of London, on 18th January 1810.

'The "'scapes" of the great god Pan.' A reference to Hazlitt's flirtation with a farmer's daughter in the Lake country, ending almost in immersion. Hylas, seeking for water with a pitcher, so enraptured the nymphs of the river with his beauty that they drew him in. Mr. Ernest de Sélincourt's *Dorothy Wordsworth* has more details.

Capell Lofft (1751–1824) was a lawyer and philanthropist of independent means who threw himself into many popular discussions and knew many literary men. He was the patron of Robert Bloomfield. Lamb was amused by him, but annoyed that his initials were also C. L. 'M. M. Phillips'—for *Monthly Magazine*, which Phillips published.

'Where is Coleridge?' Coleridge was now at Calne, in Wiltshire, with the Morgans. He was being treated for the drug habit by a Dr. Page.

'That Review.' Lamb's review of *The Excursion*, which, although the *Quarterly* that contains it is dated October 1814, must have been delayed until the end of the year. The episode of Sir W. Irthing (really Sir Alfred Irthing)

is in Book vii. Lamb's foreboding as to Gifford's action was only too well justified, as we shall see.

'Mary keeps very bad.' Mary Lamb did not recover until February 1815.]

263. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. illegible. *? Early January 1815.*]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I told you my Review was a very imperfect one. But what you will see in the Quarterly is a spurious one which Mr. Baviad Gifford has palm'd upon it for mine. I never felt more vexd in my life than when I read it. I cannot give you an idea of what he has done to it out of spite at me because he once sufferd me to be called a lunatic in his Thing. The *language* he has alterd throughout. Whatever inadequateness it had to its subject, it was in point of composition the prettiest piece of prose I ever writ, and so my sister (to whom alone I read the MS.) said. That charm if it had any is all gone: more than a third of the substance is cut away, and that not all from one place, but *passim*, so as to make utter nonsense. Every warm expression is changed for a nasty cold one. I have not the cursed alteration by me, I shall never look at it again, but for a specimen I remember I had said the Poet of the Excurs[n]. 'walks thro' common forests as thro' some Dodona or enchanted wood, and every casual bird that flits upon the boughs, like that miraculous one in Tasso, but in language more piercing than any articulate sounds, reveals to him far higher lovelays.' It is now (besides half a dozen alterations in the same half dozen lines) 'but in language more *intelligent* reveals to him'—that is one I remember. But that would have been little, putting his damnd Shoemaker phraseology (for he was a shoemaker) in stead of mine, which has been tinctured with better authors than his ignorance can comprehend—for I reckon myself a dab at *Prose*—verse I leave to my betters—God help them, if they are to be so reviewed by friend and foe as you have been this quarter. I have read 'It won't do.' But worse than altering words, he has kept a few members only of the part I had done best, which was to explain all I could of your 'scheme of harmonies,' as I had ventured to call it, between the external universe and what within us answers to it. To do this I had

accumulated a good many short passages, rising in length to the end, weaving in the Extracts as if they came in as a part of the text, naturally, not obtruding them as specimens. Of this part a little is left, but so as without conjuration no man could tell what I was driving it [? at]. A proof of it you may see (tho' not judge of the whole of the injustice) by these words: I had spoken something about 'natural methodism—' and after follows 'and therefore the tale of Margaret sh[d]. have been postponed' (I forget my words, or his words): now the reasons for postponing it are as deducible from what goes before, as they are from the 104th psalm. The passage whence I deduced it has vanished, but clapping a colon before a *therefore* is always reason enough for Mr. Baviad Gifford to allow to a reviewer that is not himself. I assure you my complaints are founded. I know how sore a word alterd makes one, but indeed of this Review the whole complexion is gone. I regret only that I did not keep a copy. I am sure you would have been pleased with it, because I have been feeding my fancy for some months with the notion of pleasing you. Its imperfection or inadequateness in size and method I knew, but for the *writing part* of it, I was fully satisfied. I hoped it would make more than atonement. Ten or twelve distinct passages come to my mind, which are gone, and what is left is of course the worse for their having been there, the eyes are pulld out and the bleeding sockets are left. I read it at Arch's shop with my face burning with vexation secretly, with just such a feeling as if it had been a review written against myself, making false quotations from me. But I am ashamed to say so much about a short piece. How are *you* served! and the labors of years turn'd into contempt by scoundrels.

But I could not but protest against your taking that thing as mine. Every *pretty* expression, (I know there were many) every warm expression, there was nothing else, is vulgarised and frozen—but if they catch me in their camps again let them spitchcock me. They had a right to do it, as no name appears to it, and Mr. Shoemaker Gifford I suppose never wa[i]ved a right he had since he commencd author. God confound him and all caitiffs. C. L.

[For the full understanding of this letter it is necessary to read Lamb's review (see vol. i of my edition of Lamb's *Works*).

William Gifford (1756–1826), editor of the *Quarterly*, had been a shoemaker's apprentice. Lamb calls him Mr. Baviad Gifford on account of his satires, *The Baviad* and *The Mæviad*, against the Della Cruscan school of poetry, of which Robert Merry had been the principal member. Some of Lamb's grudge against Gifford, which was of old standing (see notes to Lamb's review), was repaid in his sonnet *St. Crispin to Mr. Gifford* (in vol. iv of my edition of Lamb's *Works*). Gifford's connection with Canning, in the *Anti-Jacobin*, could not have improved his position with Lamb.

'I have read "It won't do."' A reference to the review of *The Excursion* in the *Edinburgh* for November, by Jeffrey, beginning 'This will never do.'

On 23rd January 1815 Crabb Robinson called on Lamb, and found him very unhappy, both from loneliness and office harassments.]

264. TO MR. SARGUS

[Dated at end: *23rd February 1815*.]

MR SARGUS,

This is to give you notice that I have parted with the Cottage to Mr. Grig Junr. to whom you will pay rent from Michaelmas last. The rent that was due at Michaelmas I do not wish you to pay me. I forgive it you as you may have been at some expences in repairs.

Yours

CH. LAMB.

Inner Temple Lane, London,
23 Feb., 1815.

[In 1812 Lamb had inherited, through his godfather, Francis Fielde, who is mentioned in the *Elia* essay 'My First Play,' a property called Button Snap, near Puckeridge, in Hertfordshire, consisting of a small cottage and about an acre of ground. In 1815 he sold it for £50, and the foregoing letter is an intimation of the transaction to his tenant. The purchaser, however, was not a Mr. Grig, but a Mr. Greg (see notes to 'My First Play' in vol. ii of my edition of Lamb's *Works*). The cottage is now a national monument, being in the care of the Royal Society of Arts.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The original letter was copied for me by Mrs. Greg, of "Coles," Buntingford, Herts. Mr. Sargus was plainly an illiterate labourer, for under Lamb's letter is written: "Read to Mr. Sargus, 27 April 1815 by me. Wm. Enever, April 27th."'

Mrs. Anderson notes that Robinson's *Diary* has, under 16th March 1811: 'C. Lamb stepped in to announce Dr. Tuthill's defeat as candidate for the post of physician to St. Luke's Hospital.' It looks as though Tuthill tried again.]

265. TO JOSEPH HUME

'Bis dat qui dat cito'

[No date.]

I hate the pedantry of expressing that in another language which we have sufficient terms for in our own. So in plain English I very much wish you to give your vote to-morrow at Clerkenwell, instead of Saturday. It would clear up the brows of my favourite candidate, and stagger the hands of the opposite party. It commences at nine. How easy, as you come from Kensington (*à propos*, how is your excellent family?) to turn down Bloomsbury, through Leather Lane (avoiding Lay Stall St. for the disagreeableness of the name). Why, it brings you in four minutes and a half to the spot renowned on northern milestones, 'where Hicks' Hall formerly stood.' There will be good cheer ready for every independent freeholder; where you see a green flag hang out go boldly in, call for ham, or beef, or what you please, and a mug of Meux's Best. How much more gentleman-like to come in the front of the battle, openly avowing one's sentiments, than to lag in on the last day, when the adversary is dejected, spiritless, laid low. Have the first cut at them. By Saturday you'll cut into the mutton. I'd go cheerfully myself, but I am no freeholder (Fuimus Troes, fuit Ilium), but I sold it for £50. If they'd accept a copy-holder, we clerks are naturally *copy*-holders.

By the way, get Mrs. Hume, or that agreeable Amelia or Caroline, to stick a bit of green in your hat. Nothing daunts the adversary more than to wear the colours of your party. Stick it in cockade-like. It has a martial, and by no means disagreeable effect.

Go, my dear freeholder, and if any chance calls you out of this transitory scene earlier than expected, the coroner shall sit lightly on your corpse. He shall not too anxiously enquire into the circumstances of blood found upon your razor. That might happen to any gentleman in shaving. Nor into your having been heard to express a contempt of life, or for scolding Louisa for what Julia did, and other trifling incoherencies.

Yours sincerely, C. LAMB.

['Bis dat': He gives twice who gives quickly.

'Lay Stall St.' This street, which is still found in Clerkenwell, was, of

course, named from one of the laystalls or public middens which were a feature of London when sanitation was in its infancy.

'Where Hicks' Hall formerly stood.' Hicks' Hall, the old Sessions House of the County of Middlesex, stood in St. John Street, Clerkenwell, until its demolition in 1782, when the justices removed to the new Sessions House on Clerkenwell Green. The milestones on the Great North Road, which had long been measured from Hicks' Hall, were reinscribed '—— Miles from the spot where Hicks' Hall formerly stood.' Thus Hicks' Hall remained a household word long after it had ceased to exist. The adventures of Jedediah Jones in search of 'the spot where Hicks' Hall formerly stood' are amusingly set forth in Knight's *London*, vol. i, pages 242–4.

'Fuimus Troes . . .': No more are we Trojans; Troy is no more. Virgil, *Æneid*, ii. 325.

I append a letter with no date, which may come here.]

266. TO MRS. HUME (?)

DEAR MRS. H., [No date.]

Sally who brings this with herself back has given every possible satisfaction in doing her work, etc., but the fact is the poor girl is oppressed with a ladylike melancholy, and cannot bear to be so much alone, as she necessarily must be in our kitchen, which to say the truth is damn'd solitary, where she can see nothing and converse with nothing and not even look out of window. The consequence is she has been caught shedding tears all day long, and her own comfort has made it indispensable to send her home. Your cheerful noisy children-crowded house has made her feel the change so much the more.

Our late servant always complained of the *want of children*, which she had been used to in her last place. One man's meat is another man's poison, as they say. However, we are eternally obliged to you, as much as if Sally could have staid. We have got an old woman coming, who is too stupid to know when she is alone and when she is not.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB, for self and sister.

Have you heard from

[I take it that Mrs. H. is Mrs. Hume, because Hume had a large family. It was of him, in his paternal light, that Lamb said, 'one fool makes many.']

267. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. partly illegible. *7th April 1815.*]

The conclusion of this epistle getting gloomy, I have chosen this part to desire *our* kindest Loves to Mrs. Wordsworth and to *Dorothea*. Will none of you ever be in London again?

DEAR WORDSW^th.^,

You have made me very proud with your successive book presents. I have been carefully through the two volumes to see that nothing was omitted which used to be there. I think I miss nothing but a Character in Antithet. manner which I do not know why you left out; the moral to the boys building the giant, the omission whereof leaves it in my mind less complete; and one admirable line gone (or something come in stead of it) 'the stone-chat and the glancing sand-piper,' which was a line quite alive. I demand these at your hand. I am glad that you have not sacrificed a verse to those scoundrels. I would not have had you offer up the poorest rag that lingered upon the stript shoulders of little Alice Fell, to have atoned all their malice. I would not have given 'em a red cloak to save their souls. I am afraid lest that substitution of a shell (a flat falsification of the history) for the household implement as it stood at first, was a kind of tub thrown out to the beast, or rather thrown out for him. The tub was a good honest tub in its place, and nothing could fairly be said against it. You say you made the alteration for the 'friendly reader,' but the malicious will take it to himself. Damn 'em; if you give 'em an inch &c. The preface is noble and such as you should write: I wish I could set my name to it—Imprimatur—but you have set it there yourself, and I thank you. I had rather be a doorkeeper in your margin, than have their proudest text swelling with my eulogies. The poems in the volumes which are new to me are so much in the old tone that I hardly received them as novelties. Of those, of which I had no previous knowlege, the four yew trees and the mysterious company which you have assembled there, most struck me—'Death the Skeleton and Time the Shadow—' It is a sight not for every youthful poet to dream of—it is one of the last results he must have gone thinking on for years for. Laodamia is a very original poem; I mean

original with reference to your own manner. You have nothing like it. I should have seen it in a strange place, and greatly admired it, but not suspected its derivation. Let me in this place, for I have writ you several letters without naming it, mention that my brother, who is a picture collector, has picked up an undoubtable picture of Milton. He gave a few shillings for it, and could get no history with it, but that some old lady had had it for a great many years. Its age is ascertainable from the state of the canvas, and you need only see it to be sure that it is the original of the heads in the Tonson Editions, with which we are all so well familiar. Since I saw you I have had a treat in the reading way which comes not every day. The Latin Poems of V. Bourne, which were quite new to me. What a heart that man had, all laid out upon town scenes, a proper counterpoise to *some people's* rural extravaganzas. Why I mention him is that your Power of Music reminded me of his poem of the balad singer in the Seven Dials. Do you remember his epigram on the old woman who taught Newton the A. B. C., which after all, he says, he hesitates not to call Newton's *Principia*. I was lately fatiguing myself with going thro' a volume of fine words by *L^d. Thurlow*—excellent words, and if the heart could live by words alone, it could desire no better regale—but what an aching vacuum of matter; I don't stick at the madness of it, for that is only a consequence of shutting his eyes and thinking he is in the age of the old Elisabeth poets; from thence I turned to V. Bourne —what a sweet unpretending pretty-mannered *matter-ful* creature, sucking from every flower, making a flower of every thing, his diction all Latin and his thoughts all English. Bless him, Latin wasn't good enough for him, why wasn't he content with the language which Gay and Prior wrote in.

I am almost sorry that you printed Extracts from those first Poems, or that you did not print them at length. They do not read to me as they do all together. Besides they have diminished the value of the original (which I possess) as a curiosity. I have hitherto kept them distinct in my mind as referring to a particular period of your life. All the rest of your poems are so much of a piece, they might have been written in the same week—these decidedly speak of an earlier period. They tell more of what you had been reading.

We were glad to see the poems by a female friend. The one of the wind is masterly, but not new to us. Being only three, perhaps you might have clapt a D. at the corner and let it have past as a printer's mark to the uninitiated, as a delightful hint to the better-instructed. As it is, Expect a formal criticism on the Poems of your female friend, and she must expect it.

I should have written before, but I am cruelly engaged and like to be. On Friday I was at office from 10 in the morning (two hours dinner except) to 11 at night, last night till 9. My business and office business in general has increased so. I don't mean I am there every night, but I must expect a great deal of it. I never leave till 4—and do not keep a holyday now once in ten times, where I used to keep all red letter days, and some fine days besides which I used to dub Nature's holydays. I have had my day. I had formerly little to do. So of the little that is left of life I may reckon two thirds as dead, for Time that a man may call his own is his Life, and hard work and thinking about it taints even the leisure hours, stains Sunday with workday contemplations—this is Sunday, and the headache I have is part late hours at work the 2 preceding nights and part later hours over a consoling pipe afterwds. But I find stupid acquiescence coming over me. I bend to the yoke, and it is almost with me and my household as with the man and his consort—

> To them each evening had its glittering star
> And every Sabbath day its golden sun—

To such straits am I driven for the Life of life, Time—O that from that superfluity of Holyday leisure my youth wasted 'Age might but take some hours youth wanted not.—' N.B. I have left off spirituous liquors for 4 or more months, with a moral certainty of its lasting. Farewell, dear Wordsworth.

[Wordsworth had just brought out, with Longman, his *Poems . . . including Lyrical Ballads and the Miscellaneous Pieces of the Author*, 1815, in two volumes. The *Character in the Antithetical Manner* was omitted from all editions of Wordsworth's poems between 1800 and 1836. In the 1800 version of *Rural Architecture* there had been these last lines, expunged in the editions of 1805 and 1815, but restored with a slight alteration in later editions:

> —Some little I've seen of blind boisterous works
> In Paris and London, 'mong Christians or Turks,
> Spirits busy to do and undo:

At remembrance whereof my blood sometimes will flag,
—Then, light-hearted Boys, to the top of the Crag;
And I'll build up a Giant with you.

In the original form of the *Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew-tree* there had been these lines:

His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the glancing sand-piper.

Wordsworth had altered them to:

His only visitants a straggling sheep,
The stone-chat, or the sand-lark, restless Bird,
Piping along the margin of the lake.

In the 1820 edition Wordsworth put back the original form.

'Those scoundrels.' Principally the critic of the *Edinburgh*, Jeffrey, but Wordsworth's assailants generally.

'That substitution of a shell.' In the original draft of *The Blind Highland Boy* the adventurous voyage was made in

A Household Tub, like one of those
Which women use to wash their clothes.

In the new version the vessel was a turtle's shell.

'The preface.' Wordsworth quotes from Lamb's essay in the *Reflector* on the genius of Hogarth, referring to the passage as 'the language of one of my most esteemed Friends.' It is Lamb's description of Imagination as that which 'draws all things to one, which makes things animate or inanimate, beings with their attributes, subjects with their accessories, take one colour and serve to one effect.'

'The four yew trees.' The poem is called *Yew-Trees*. This is the passage in question:

But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks! and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwisted fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane;—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope,
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow; there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er

With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

'Picture of Milton.' This portrait is now the property of the New York Public Library.

'V. Bourne.' The Rev. Vincent Bourne (1695–1747), a master at Westminster. Lamb afterwards translated some of Bourne's *Poemata*, 1734, and, in an enlarged edition, 1743, and wrote critically of them in the *Englishman's Magazine* in 1831.

'L^{d}. Thurlow.' But see Letter to Bernard Barton of 5th December 1828, and note, and the *Elia* essay on 'Some Sonnets of Sir Philip Sydney,' 1823.

'Extracts from those first Poems.' Wordsworth included extracts from juvenile pieces, which had been first published in his *Descriptive Sketches*, 1793.

'A female friend.' Dorothy Wordsworth. The three poems were *Address to a Child* (beginning, 'What way does the Wind come?'), *The Mother's Return*, and *The Cottager to Her Infant*.

'To them each evening had its glittering star . . .' *The Excursion*, Book v.

'Age might but take some hours . . .' From Wordsworth's latest poem about the Small Celandine, 1804:

Age might but take the things Youth needed not.]

268. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *28th April 1815*.]

Excuse this maddish letter: I am too tired to write in formâ—

DEAR WORDSWth.,

The more I read of your two last volumes, the more I feel it necessary to make my acknowledgm^{ts}. for them in more than one short letter. The Night Piece to which you refer me I meant fully to have noticed, but the fact is I come so fluttering and languid from business, tired with thoughts of it, frightened with fears of it, that when I get a few minutes to sit down to scribble (an action of the hand now seldom natural to me—I mean voluntary pen-work) I lose all presential memory of what I had intended to say, and say what I can,—talk about Vincent Bourne or any casual image instead of that which I had meditated—by the way, I must look out V. B. for you.—So I had meant to have mentioned Yarrow Visited, with that stanza, 'But thou that didst appear so fair—' than which I think no lovelier stanza can be found in the wide world of poetry—yet the poem on the whole seems condemned to leave behind it a melancholy of imperfect

satisfaction, as if you had wronged the feeling with which in what preceded it you had resolved never to visit it, and as if the Muse had determined in the most delicate manner to make you, and *scarce make you*, feel it. Else, it is far superior to the other, which has but one exquisite verse in it, the last but one, or the two last—this has all fine, except perhaps that *that* of 'studious ease and generous cares' has a little tinge of the *less romantic* about it. The farmer of Tilsbury vale is a charming counter part to poor Susan, with the addition of that delicacy towards aberrations from the strict path which is so fine in the Old Thief and the boy by his side, which always brings water into my eyes. Perhaps it is the worse for being a repetition. Susan stood for the representative of poor Rus in Urbe. There was quite enough to stamp the moral of the thing never to be forgotten. 'Fast volumes of vapour' &c. The last verse of Susan was to be got rid of at all events. It threw a kind of dubiety upon Susan's moral conduct. Susan is a servant maid. I see her trundling her mop and contemplating the whirling phenomenon thro' blurred optics; but to term her a poor outcast seems as much as to say that poor Susan was no better than she should be, which I trust was not what you meant to express. Robin Goodfellow supports himself without that *stick* of a moral which you have thrown away,—but how I can be brought in felo de omittendo for that Ending to the boy builders is a mystery. I can't say positively now—I only know that no line oftener or readier occurs than that 'Light hearted boys, I will build up a giant with you.' It comes naturally with a warm holyday and the freshness of the blood. It is a perfect summer Amulet that I tye round my legs to quicken their motion when I go out a Maying. (N.B.) I don't often go out a maying.—*Must* is the tense with me now. Do you take the Pun? Young Romilly is divine, the reasons of his mother's grief being remediless. I never saw parental love carried up so high, towering above the other Loves. Shakspeare had done something for the filial in Cordelia, and by implication for the fatherly too in Lear's resentment—he left it for you to explore the depths of the maternal heart. I get stupid, and flat and flattering—what's the use of telling you what good things you have written, or—I hope I may add—that I know them to be good. Apropos—when I first opened upon the

just mentioned poem, in a careless tone I said to Mary as if putting a riddle 'What is good for a bootless bean?' to which with infinite presence of mind (as the jest book has it) she answered, a 'shoeless pea.' It was the first joke she ever made. Joke the 2d I make—you distinguish well in your old preface between the verses of Dr. Johnson of the man in the Strand, and that from the babes of the wood. I was thinking whether taking your own glorious lines—

And for the love was in her soul
For the youthful Romilly—

which, by the love I bear my own soul, I think have no parallel in any of the best old Balads, and just altering it to—

And from the great respect she felt
For Sir Samuel Romilly—

would not have explained the boundaries of prose expression and poetic feeling nearly as well. Excuse my levity on such an occasion. I never felt deeply in my life, if that poem did not make me, both lately and when I read it in MS. No alderman ever longed after a haunch of buck venison more than I for a Spiritual taste of that White Doe you promise. I am sure it is superlative, or will be when *drest*, i.e. printed. All things read raw to me in MS.—to compare magna parvis, I cannot endure my own writings in that state. The only one which I think would not very much win upon me in print is Peter Bell. But I am not certain. You ask me about your preface. I like both that and the Supplement without an exception. The account of what you mean by Imagination is very valuable to me. It will help me to like some things in poetry better, which is a little humiliating in me to confess. I thought I could not be instructed in that science (I mean the critical), as I once heard old obscene beastly Peter Pindar in a dispute on Milton say he thought that if he had reason to value himself upon one thing more than another it was in knowing what good verse was. Who lookd over your proof sheets, and left *ordebo* in that line of Virgil?

My brothers picture of Milton is very finely painted, that is, it might have been done by a hand next to Vandyke's. It is the genuine Milton, and an object of quiet gaze for the half hour at a time. *Yet* tho' I am confident there is no better one of him, the face does not quite answer to Milton. There is a tinge of petit

(or petite, how do you spell it) querulousness about. Yet hang it, now I remember better, there is not—it is calm, melancholy, and poetical.

One of the copies you sent had precisely the same pleasant blending of a sheet of 2d vol. with a sheet of 1st. I think it was page 245; but I sent it and had it rectifyd. It gave me in the first impetus of cutting the leaves just such a cold squelch as going down a plausible turning and suddenly reading 'no thoroughfare.' Robinson's is entire; he is gone to Bury his father.

I wish you would write more criticism, about Spenser &c. I think I could say something about him myself—but Lord bless me—these 'merchants and their spicy drugs' which are so harmonious to sing of, they lime-twig up my poor soul and body, till I shall forget I ever thought myself a bit of a genius! I can't even put a few thoughts on paper for a newspaper. I 'engross,' when I should pen a paragraph. Confusion blast all mercantile transactions, all traffick, exchange of commodities, intercourse between nations, all the consequent civilization and wealth and amity and link of society, and getting rid of prejudices, and knowledge of the face of the globe—and rot the very firs of the forest that look so romantic alive, and die into desks. Vale.

Yours dear W. and all yours' C. LAMB.

[*Added at foot of the first page:*] N.B. Dont read that Q. Review—I will never look into another.

[Lamb continues his criticism of the 1815 edition of Wordsworth's *Poems*. The *Night-piece* begins:

The sky is overcast.

Wordsworth's *Yarrow Unvisited* was written in 1803. The last-but-one stanza—the 'one exquisite verse'—in it runs thus:

Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We 'll keep them, winsome Marrow!
For when we 're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!

The stanza of *Yarrow Visited* which Lamb so admired runs thus:

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day

Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy.

Wordsworth subsequently altered the lines:

Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
It promises protection
To studious ease and generous cares
And every chaste affection.

to:

Yon cottage seems a bower of bliss,
A covert for protection
Of tender thoughts, that nestle there—
The brood of chaste affection.

Poor Susan had in the 1800 version ended thus:

Poor Outcast! return—to receive thee once more
The house of thy Father will open its door,
And thou once again, in thy plain russet gown,
May'st hear the thrush sing from a tree of its own.

Wordsworth expunged this stanza in the 1815 edition. 'Fast volumes of vapour' should be 'Bright volumes of vapour.' For 'the Old Thief' see *The Two Thieves*.

'Felo de omittendo.' See the preceding letter, where Lamb remonstrated with Wordsworth for omitting the last lines from *Rural Architecture*. Wordsworth seems to have charged Lamb with the criticism that decided their removal.

'The Pun.' Canon Ainger pointed out that Hood, in his *Ode to Melancholy*, makes the same pun very happily:

Like the sweet blossoms of the May,
Whose fragrance ends in must.

'Young Romilly.' In *The Force of Prayer*, which opens with the question:

What is good for a bootless bene?

Later Mary Lamb made another joke, when at Munden's farewell performance she said, 'Sic transit gloria Munden!'

The stanzas from which Lamb quotes run:

'What is good for a bootless bene?'
The Falconer to the Lady said;
And she made answer 'Endless sorrow!'
For she knew that her Son was dead.

She knew it by the Falconer's words,
And from the look of the Falconer's eye;
And from the love which was in her soul
For her youthful Romilly.

Sir Samuel Romilly (1757–1818), the lawyer and law reformer, was the great opponent of capital punishment for small offences.

In the preface to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, etc., Wordsworth had quoted Dr. Johnson's lines in parody of a poor ballad:

I put my hat upon my head
And walked into the Strand,
And there I met another man
Whose hat was in his hand.

—contrasting them with these lines from the *Babes in the Wood*:

These pretty Babes with hand in hand
Went wandering up and down;
But never more they saw the Man
Approaching from the Town.

'Peter Pindar.' John Wolcot (1738–1819), whom Lamb had met at Henry Rogers's, brother of the poet.]

269. MARY LAMB TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: Spring *1815*.]

MY DEAR MISS BETHAM,

My brother and myself return you a thousand thanks for your kind communication. We have read your poem many times over with increased interest, and very much wish to see you to tell you how highly we have been pleased with it. May we beg one favour?—I keep the manuscript in the hope that you will grant it. It is that, either now or when the whole poem is completed, you will read it over with us. When I say with *us*, of course I mean Charles. I know that you have many judicious friends, but I have so often known my brother spy out errors in a manuscript which has passed through many judicious hands, that I shall not be easy if you do not permit him to look yours carefully through with you; and also you *must* allow him to correct the press for you.

If I knew where to find you I would call upon you. Should you feel nervous at the idea of meeting Charles in the capacity of a *severe censor*, give me a line, and I will come to you any where, and convince you in five minutes that he is even timid, stammers, and can scarcely speak for modesty and fear of giving pain when he finds himself placed in that kind of office. Shall I appoint a time to see you here when he is from home? I will send him out any time you will name; indeed, I am always naturally alone till four o'clock. If you are nervous about coming, remember I am equally so about the liberty I have taken, and shall be till we meet and laugh off our mutual fears.

Yours most affectionately M. LAMB.

I should have written earlier but every day I hoped on the morrow to be able to set out on a pilgrimage to hunt you out somewhere, and the toothache has hitherto prevented me.

Thursday.
No. 4 Inner Temple Lane.

I cannot find Mr. Dyer at home so I have no loving message to communicate.

270. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

DR. W., [*May 1815.*]

We have just returned from our expedition which has proved very pleasant. Thursday is our club night—the evening I told you I expected W. H. so we must defer our meeting till you can name another open evening. I almost fear I can scarce reckon upon any particular one, I am so busy, but I hope to see you somehow soon. I don't know whether you would not have form'd a correcter estimate of Miss O'Neil from Isabella than from Juliet. Shakspear bothers them all sadly.

Yours truly,
C. L.

['W. H.' Hazlitt, whom Wordsworth did not want to meet.
Eliza O'Neill (1791–1872) made her debut at Covent Garden as Juliet in 1814, and was very successful and popular in various parts until, in 1819, she married William Wrixon Becher, an Irish M.P., and retired.]

271. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

DEAR SOUTHEY, London, *6th May 1815.*

I have received from Longman a copy of 'Roderick,' with the author's compliments, for which I much thank you. I don't know where I shall put all the noble presents I have lately received in that way; the 'Excursion,' Wordsworth's two last vols., and now 'Roderick,' have come pouring in upon me like some irruption from Helicon. The story of the brave Maccabee was already, you may be sure, familiar to me in all its parts. I have, since the receipt of your present, read it quite through again, and with no diminished pleasure. I don't know whether I ought to say that it has given me more pleasure than any of your

long poems. 'Kehama' is doubtless more powerful, but I don't feel that firm footing in it that I do in 'Roderick;' my imagination goes sinking and floundering in the vast spaces of unopened-before systems and faiths; I am put out of the pale of my old sympathies; my moral sense is almost outraged; I can't believe, or with horror am made to believe, such desperate chances against omnipotences, such disturbances of faith to the centre. The more potent the more painful the spell. Jove and his brotherhood of gods, tottering with the giant assailings, I can bear, for the soul's hopes are not struck at in such contests; but your Oriental almighties are too much types of the intangible prototype to be meddled with without shuddering. One never connects what are called the attributes with Jupiter. I mention only what diminishes my delight at the wonder-workings of 'Kehama,' not what impeaches its power, which I confess with trembling.

But 'Roderick' is a comfortable poem. It reminds me of the delight I took in the first reading of the 'Joan of Arc.' It is maturer and better than *that*, though not better to me now than that was then. It suits me better than 'Madoc.' I am at home in Spain and Christendom. I have a timid imagination, I am afraid. I do not willingly admit of strange beliefs or out-of-the-way creeds or places. I never read books of travel, at least not farther than Paris or Rome. I can just endure Moors, because of their connection as foes with Christians; but Abyssinians, Ethiops, Esquimaux, Dervises, and all that tribe, I hate. I believe I fear them in some manner. A Mahometan turban on the stage, though enveloping some well known face (Mr. Cook or Mr. Maddox, whom I see another day good Christian and English waiters, innkeepers, &c.), does not give me pleasure unalloyed. I am a Christian, Englishman, Londoner, *Templar*. God help me when I come to put off these snug relations, and to get abroad into the world to come! I shall be like *the crow on the sand*, as Wordsworth has it; but I won't think on it—no need, I hope, yet.

The parts I have been most pleased with, both on 1st and 2nd readings, perhaps, are Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime, confessed to him in his disguise—the retreat of Palayo's family first discovered,—his being made king—'For acclamation one form must serve, *more solemn for* the *breach of old observances*.' Roderick's vow is extremely fine, and his blessing on the vow of Alphonso:

Towards the troop he spread his arms,
As if the expanded soul diffused itself,
And carried to all spirits *with the act*
Its affluent inspiration.

It struck me forcibly that the feeling of these last lines might have been suggested to you by the Cartoon of Paul at Athens. Certain it is that a better motto or guide to that famous attitude can no where be found. I shall adopt it as explanatory of that violent, but dignified motion.

I must read again Landor's 'Julian.' I have not read it some time. I think he must have failed in Roderick, for I remember nothing of him, nor of any distinct character as a character—only fine-sounding passages. I remember thinking also he had chosen a point of time after the event, as it were, for Roderick survives to no use; but my memory is weak, and I will not wrong a fine Poem by trusting to it.

The notes to your poem I have not read again; but it will be a take-downable book on my shelf, and they will serve sometimes at breakfast, or times too light for the text to be duly appreciated. Though some of 'em, one of the serpent Penance, is serious enough, now I think on't.

Of Coleridge I hear nothing, nor of the Morgans. I hope to have him like a re-appearing star, standing up before me some time when least expected in London, as has been the case whylear.

I am *doing* nothing (as the phrase is) but reading presents, and walk away what of the day-hours I can get from hard occupation. Pray accept once more my hearty thanks, and expression of pleasure for your remembrance of me. My sister desires her kind respects to Mrs. S. and to all at Keswick.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

The next Present I look for is the 'White Doe.' Have you seen Mat. Betham's 'Lay of Marie?' I think it very delicately pretty as to sentiment, &c.

[Southey's *Roderick, the Last of the Goths*, was published in 1814. Driven from his throne by the Moors, Roderick had disguised himself as a monk under the name of Father Maccabee. *The Curse of Kehama* had been published in 1810; *Madoc* in 1805; *Joan of Arc* in 1796. Southey was now Poet Laureate.

'I never read books of travels.' Writing to Dilke, of the *Athenæum*, for books, some years later, Lamb makes a point of 'no natural history or useful learning'

being sent, 'such as Pyramids, Catcombs, Giraffes, Adventures in Southern Africa, etc.' None the less, as a boy, he tells us, he had read Bruce and applied his Abyssinian methods to the New River (see the *Elia* essay on Newspapers).

'The crow on the sand.' In *The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale*:

As lonely he stood as a crow on the sands.

Stanza xii, line 4.

Florinda's palliation of Roderick's crime is in Book x; the retreat of Pelayo's family discovered, in Book xvi; Pelayo made king, in Book xviii. Landor's *Count Julian*, published in 1812, dealt with the same story, Florinda, whom Roderick violated, having been the daughter of the count, a Spanish Goth. Julian devoted himself to Roderick's ruin, even turning traitor for the purpose. Southey's notes are tremendous—sometimes filling all but a line or two of the page.

'Whylear.' Not so long ago.

'The *White Doe*.' Wordsworth's poem *The White Doe of Rylstone*, to be published this year, 1815.

'Matilda Betham's *Lay of Marie*.' We shall come to this shortly. The poem was still in MS.

At Sotheby's on 31st July 1933 was sold a letter from Lamb to Basil Montagu, dated 20th June 1815, concerning the misfortunes of a man who had been at Christ's Hospital and asking for a presentation for his son.]

272. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

DEAR SOUTHEY, *Aug. 9th, 1815.*

Robinson is not on the circuit, as I erroneously stated in a letter to W. W., which travels with this, but is gone to Brussels, Ostend, Ghent, &c. But his friends the Colliers, whom I consulted respecting your friend's fate, remember to have heard him say, that Father Pardo had effected his escape (the cunning greasy rogue), and to the best of their belief is at present in Paris. To my thinking, it is a small matter whether there be one fat friar more or less in the world. I have rather a taste for clerical executions, imbibed from early recollections of the fate of the excellent Dodd. I hear Bionaparte has sued his habeas corpus, and the twelve judges are now sitting upon it at the Rolls.

Your boute-feu (bonfire) must be excellent of its kind. Poet Settle presided at the last great thing of the kind in London, when the pope was burnt in form. Do you provide any verses on this occasion? Your fear for Hartley's intellectuals is just and rational. Could not the Chancellor be petitioned to remove him? His lordship took Mr. Betty from under the paternal wing.

I think at least he should go through a course of matter-of-fact with some sober man after the mysteries. Could not he spend a week at Poole's before he goes back to Oxford? Tobin is dead. But there is a man in my office, a Mr. Hedges, who proses it away from morning to night, and never gets beyond corporal and material verities. He'd get these crack-brain metaphysics out of the young gentleman's head as soon as any one I know. When I can't sleep o' nights, I imagine a dialogue with Mr. H. upon any given subject, and go prosing on in fancy with him, till I either laugh or fall asleep. I have literally found it answer. I am going to stand godfather; I don't like the business; I cannot muster up decorum for these occasions; I shall certainly disgrace the font. I was at Hazlitt's marriage, and had like to have been turned out several times during the ceremony. Any thing awful makes me laugh. I misbehaved once at a funeral. Yet I can read about these ceremonies with pious and proper feelings. The realities of life only seem the mockeries. I fear I must get cured along with Hartley, if not too inveterate. Don't you think Louis the Desirable is in a sort of quandary?

After all, Bonaparte is a fine fellow, as my barber says, and I should not mind standing bareheaded at his table to do him service in his fall. They should have given him Hampton Court or Kensington, with a tether extending forty miles round London. Qu. Would not the people have ejected the Brunswicks some day in his favour? Well, we shall see.

C. LAMB.

['Father Pardo.' Mrs. Anderson says that this fat friar was a Spanish priest and poet.

'The excellent Dodd.' The Rev. William Dodd (1729–77), compiler of *The Beauties of Shakespeare*, was hanged for forgery when Lamb was two years old. The case caused immense public interest.

'Bionaparte.' Waterloo had been fought on 18th June.

'Your boute-feu.' The bonfire in honour of Waterloo flamed on Skiddaw on 21st August. See Southey's description in his letter to his brother, 23rd August 1815 (*Life and Correspondence*, vol. iv, page 120).

'Poet Settle.' Elkanah Settle (1648–1724) was chief organizer of the procession on the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's birthday in 1680, when the Pope was burned in effigy.

Hartley Coleridge, now almost nineteen, after having been to school at Ambleside, had been sent to Oxford through the instrumentality of his uncle,

Southey, being admitted to Merton College on 6th May 1815. At the time of Lamb's letter he was staying at Calne with his father.

Mr. Betty was the Young Roscius, who, after retiring from the phenomenon stage of his career in 1808, had since been to school and to Cambridge upon his earnings, and had now become an adult actor.

Poole was Thomas Poole of Nether Stowey, whom we have seen: Coleridge's old and very sensible friend.

Tobin would probably be James Webbe Tobin, the brother of the dramatist. He had died in 1814.

'I am going to stand godfather.' To what child I do not know.

'Louis the Desirable.' Louis XVIII, styled by the Royalists '*Le Désiré.*']

273. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[*9th August* 1815.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

We acknowledge with pride the receit of both your hand writings, and desire to be ever had in kindly remembrance by you both and by Dorothy. Miss Hutchinson has just transmitted us a letter containing, among other chearful matter, the annunciation of a child born. Nothing of consequence has turned up in our parts since your departure. Mary and I felt quite queer after your taking leave (you W. W.) of us in St. Giles's. We wishd we had seen more of you, but felt we had scarce been sufficiently acknowleging for the share we had enjoyed of your company. We felt as if we had been not enough *expressive* of our pleasure. But our manners *both* are a little too much on this side of too-much-cordiality. We want presence of mind and presence of heart. What we feel comes too late, like an after thought impromptu. But perhaps you observed nothing of that which we have been painfully conscious of, and are, every day, in our intercourse with those we stand affected to through all the degrees of love.

Robinson is on the Circuit. Our Panegyrist I thought had forgotten one of the objects of his youthful admiration, but I was agreeably removed from that scruple by the laundress knocking at my door this morning almost before I was up, with a present of fruit from my young friend, &c.—There is something inexpressibly pleasant to me in these *presents*. Be it fruit, or fowl, or brawn, or *what not*. *Books* are a legitimate cause of acceptance. If presents be not the soul of friendship, undoubtedly they are the most spiritual part of the body of that

intercourse. There is too much narrowness of thinking in this point. The punctilio of acceptance methinks is too confined and straitlaced. I could be content to receive money, or clothes, or a joint of meat from a friend; why should he not send me a dinner as well as a dessert? I would taste him in the beasts of the field, and thro' all creation. Therefore did the basket of fruit of the juvenile Talfourd not displease me. Not that I have any thoughts of bartering or reciprocating these things. To send him any thing in return would be to reflect suspicion of mercenariness upon what I know he meant a freewill offering. Let him overcome me in bounty. In this strife a generous nature loves to be overcome.

Alsager (whom you call Alsinger—and indeed he is rather *singer* than *sager*, no reflection upon his naturals neither) is well and in harmony with himself and the world. I don't know how he and those of his constitution keep their nerves so nicely balanced as they do. Or have they any? or are they made of packthread? He is proof against weather, ingratitude, meat under done, every weapon of fate. I have just now a jagged end of a tooth pricking against my tongue, which meets it half way in a wantonness of provocation, and there they go at it, the tongue pricking itself like the viper against the file, and the tooth galling all the gum inside and out to torture, tongue and tooth, tooth and tongue, hard at it, and I to pay the reckoning, till all my mouth is as hot as brimstone, and I'd venture the roof of my mouth that at this moment, at which I conjecture my full-happinessed friend is picking his crackers, not one of the double rows of ivory in his privileged mouth has as much as a flaw in it, but all perform their functions, and having performed it, expect to be picked (luxurious steeds!) and rubbed down. I don't think he could be robbed, or could have his house set on fire, or ever want money. I have heard him express a similar opinion of his own impassibility. I keep acting here Heautontimorumenos. M. Burney has been to Calais and has come home a travelld Monsieur. He speaks nothing but the Gallic Idiom. Field is on circuit. So now I believe I have given account of most that you saw at our Cabin.

Have you seen a curious letter in Morn. Chron., by C. Ll., the genius of absurdity, respecting Bonaparte's suing out his Habeas Corpus. That man is his own moon. He has no need of ascending into that gentle planet for mild influences.

You wish me some of your leisure. I have a glimmering aspect, a chink-light of liberty before me, which I pray God may prove not fallacious. My remonstrances have stirred up others to remonstrate, and altogether, there is a plan for separating certain parts of business from our department, which if it take place will produce me more time, i.e. my evenings free. It may be a means of placing me in a more conspicuous situation which will knock at my nerves another way, but I wait the issue in submission. If I can but begin my own day at 4 o Clock in the afternoon, I shall think myself to have Eden days of peace and liberty to what I have had.

As you say, how a man can fill 3 volumes up with an Essay on the Drama is wonderful. I am sure a very few sheets would hold all I had to say on the subject, and yet I dare say ********** [*] as Von Slagel *** Did you ever read Charron on Wisdom? or Patrick's Pilgrim? if neither, you have two great pleasures to come. I mean some day to attack Caryl on Job, six Folios. What any man can write, surely I may read. If I do but get rid of auditing Warehousekeepers Acct^{s}. and get no worse-harassing task in the place of it, what a Lord of Liberty I shall be. I shall dance and skip and make mouths at the invisible event, and pick the thorns out of my pillow and throw 'em at rich men's night caps, and talk blank verse, hoity toity, and sing 'A Clerk I was in London Gay,' ban, ban, Ca-Caliban, like the emancipated monster, and go where I like, up this street or down that ally. Adieu, and pray that it may be my luck. Good be to you all.

C. LAMB.

['A child born.' This was George Hutchinson, Mrs. Wordsworth's nephew.

'Our Panegyrist.' Thomas Noon Talfourd. This is Lamb's first mention of his future biographer. Talfourd was then just twenty, had published some poems, and was reading law with Chitty, the special pleader. He had met Lamb at the beginning of 1815 through William Evans, owner of the *Pamphleteer*, had scoured London for a copy of *Rosamund Gray*, and had written of Lamb in the *Pamphleteer* as one of the chief of living poets. He then became an ardent supporter of Wordsworth, his principal criticism of whom was written later for the *New Monthly Magazine*.

'If presents be not the soul of friendship.' Lamb's 'Thoughts on Presents of Game,' written many years later for the *Athenæum*, reproduces this theme (see vol. i of my edition of the *Works*).

'Alsager.' Thomas Massa Alsager, a friend of Crabb Robinson, and through

him of Lamb, was a strange blend of the financial and the musical critic. He controlled the departments of Money and Music for *The Times* for many years.

Mrs. Anderson notes that on 3rd August 1815 Godwin writes to his wife: 'Miss Lamb has just called in to ask me to sup with them on Saturday evening at Mr. Alsager's, in the Borough, a clever man, she says, a bachelor, a whist player, and a new acquaintance of theirs. She says they were within an ace of embarking in the *Friendship* on Saturday last for Southend, agreeably to your invitation.'

'Field.' Barron Field (see note on page 210).

'Heautontimorumenos': The Self-Tormentor. The name of a comedy by Terence.

'C. Ll.' Capell Lofft (see note on page 147). He wrote to the *Morning Chronicle* for 2nd and 3rd August 1815, as Lamb says. The gist of his argument was in this sentence:

> [7th para.] Bonaparte with the concurrence of the *Admiralty*, is *within* the limits of British *local* allegiance. He is a *temporary*, considered as private, though not a natural born *subject*, and as *such* within the limits of 31 Car. II, the *Habeas Corpus* Act, [etc.].

On 10th August he wrote again, quoting the lines from *The Tempest*:

> The nobler action is,
> In virtue than in vengeance:—He being here
> The sole drift of our purpose, wrath here ends;
> Not a frown further.

'An Essay on the Drama.' This cryptic passage refers, I imagine, to a translation by John Black, afterwards the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, of August von Schlegel's *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, 2 vols., 1815. Does Lamb mean: 'And yet, I dare say, *I know as much* as Von Slagel *did*'?

'Charron on Wisdom' and 'Patrick's Pilgrim.' Pierre Charron's *De la Sagesse*, and Bishop Patrick's *Parable of the Pilgrim*, 1664, a curious anticipation of Bunyan. Lamb had written of both these books in a little essay contributed in 1813 to the *Examiner* entitled 'Books with One Idea in them,' which will be found in vol. i of my edition of the *Works*.

'Make mouths at the invisible event.' *Hamlet*, IV. iv. 50.

'A Clerk I was in London Gay.' A song sung in Colman's *Inkle and Yarico*, 1787, which Lamb actually did use as a motto for his *Elia* essay 'The Superannuated Man,' dealing with his emancipation ten years later.]

274. JOINT LETTER BY MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

[Dated at end: *20th August 1815*.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

It is less fatigue to me to write upon lines, and I want to fill up as much of my paper as I can in gratitude for the pleasure

your very kind letter has given me. I began to think I should not hear from you; knowing you were not fond of letter-writing I quite forgave you, but I was very sorry. Do not make a point of conscience of it, but if ever you feel an inclination you cannot think how much a few lines would delight me. I am happy to hear so good an account of your sister and child, and sincerely wish her a perfect recovery. I am glad you did not arrive sooner, you escaped much anxiety. I have just received a very chearful letter from Mrs. Morgan—the following I have picked out as I think it will interest you. 'Hartley Coleridge has been with us for two months. Morgan invited him to pass the long vacation here in the hope that his father would be of great service to him in his studies: he seems to be extremely amiable. I believe he is to spend the next vacation at Lady Beaumont's. Your old friend Coleridge is very hard at work at the preface to a new Edition which he is just going to publish in the same form as Mr. Wordsworth's—at first the preface was not to exceed five or six pages, it has however grown into a work of great importance. I believe Morgan has already written nearly two hundred pages. The title of it is "*Autobiographia Literaria:*" to which are added "*Sybilline Leaves,*" a collection of Poems by the same author. Calne has lately been much enlivened by an excellent company of players—last week they performed the "Remorse" to a very crowded and brilliant audience; two of the characters were admirably well supported; at the request of the actors Morgan was behind the scenes all the time and assisted in the music &c.'

Thanks to your kind interference we have had a very nice letter from Mr. Wordsworth. Of them and of you we think and talk quite with a painful regret that we did not see more of you, and that it may be so long before we meet again.

I am going to do a queer thing—I have wearied myself with writing a long letter to Mrs. Morgan, a part of which is an incoherent rambling account of a jaunt we have just been taking. I want to tell you all about it, for we so seldom do such things that it runs strangely in my head, and I feel too tired to give you other than the mere copy of the nonsense I have just been writing.

'Last Saturday was the grand feast day of the India House Clerks. I think you must have heard Charles talk of his yearly

turtle feast. He has been lately much wearied with work, and, glad to get rid of all connected with it, he *used* Saturday, the feast day being a holiday, *borrowed* the Monday following, and we set off on the outside of the Cambridge Coach from Fetter Lane at eight o'clock, and were driven into Cambridge in great triumph by Hell Fire Dick five minutes before three. Richard is in high reputation, he is private tutor to the Whip Club. Journeys used to be tedious torments to me, but seated out in the open air I enjoyed every mile of the way—the first twenty miles was particularly pleasing to me, having been accustomed to go so far on that road in the Ware Stage Coach to visit my Grandmother in the days of other times.

'In my life I never spent so many pleasant hours together as I did at Cambridge. We were walking the whole time—out of one College into another. If you ask me which I like best I must make the children's traditionary unoffending reply to all curious enquirers—"*Both.*" I liked them all best. The little gloomy ones, because they were little gloomy ones. I felt as if I could live and die in them and never wish to speak again. And the fine grand Trinity College, Oh how fine it was! And King's College Chapel, what a place! I heard the Cathedral service there, and having been no great church goer of late years, *that* and the painted windows and the general effect of the whole thing affected me wonderfully.

'I certainly like St. John's College best. I had seen least of it, having only been over it once, so, on the morning we returned, I got up at six o'clock and wandered into it by myself—by myself indeed, for there was nothing alive to be seen but one cat, who followed me about like a dog. Then I went over Trinity, but nothing hailed me there, not even a cat.

'On the Sunday we met with a pleasant thing. We had been congratulating each other that we had come alone to enjoy, as the miser his feast, all our sights greedily to ourselves, but having seen all we began to grow flat and wish for this and tother body with us, when we were accosted by a young gownsman whose face we knew, but where or how we had seen him we could not tell, and were obliged to ask his name. He proved to be a young man we had seen twice at Alsager's. He turned out a very pleasant fellow—shewed us the insides of places—we took him to our Inn

to dinner, and drank tea with him in such a delicious college room, and then again he supped with us. We made our meals as short as possible, to lose no time, and walked our young conductor almost off his legs. Even when the fried eels were ready for supper and coming up, having a message from a man who we had bribed for the purpose, that then we might see Oliver Cromwell, who was *not at home* when we called to see him, we sallied out again and made him a visit by candlelight—and so ended our sights. When we were setting out in the morning our new friend came to bid us good bye, and rode with us as far as Trompington. I never saw a creature so happy as he was the whole time he was with us, he said we had put him in such good spirits that [he] should certainly pass an examination well that he is to go through in six weeks in order to qualify himself to obtain a fellowship.

'Returning home down old Fetter Lane I could hardly keep from crying to think it was all over. With what pleasure [Charles] shewed me Jesus College where Coleridge was—the barbe[r's shop] where Manning was—the house where Lloyd lived —Franklin's rooms, a young schoolfellow with whom Charles was the first time he went to Cambridge: I peeped in at his window, the room looked quite deserted—old chairs standing about in disorder that seemed to have stood there ever since they had sate in them. I write sad nonsense about these things, but I wish you had heard Charles talk his nonsense over and over again about his visit to Franklin, and how he then first felt himself commencing gentleman and had eggs for his breakfast.' Charles Lamb commencing gentleman!

A lady who is sitting by me seeing what I am doing says I remind her of her husband, who acknowledged that the first love letter he wrote to her was a copy of one he had made use of on a former occasion.

This is no letter, but if you give me any encouragement to write again you shall have one entirely to yourself: a little encouragement will do, a few lines to say you are well and remember us. I will keep this tomorrow, maybe Charles will put a few lines to it—I always send off a humdrum letter of mine with great satisfaction if I can get him to freshen it up a little at the end. Let me beg my love to your sister Johanna with many thanks.

I have much pleasure in looking forward to her nice bacon, the maker of which I long have had a great desire to see.

God bless you, my dear Miss Hutchinson, I remain ever
Your affectionate friend

M. LAMB.

Augst. 20.

II. CHARLES LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

DEAR MISS HUTCHINSON,

I subscribe most willingly to all my sister says of her Enjoyment at Cambridge. She was in silent raptures all the while *there*, and came home riding thro' the air (her 1st long outside journey) triumphing as if she had been *graduated*. I remember one foolish-pretty expression she made use of, 'Bless the little churches how pretty they are,' as those symbols of civilized life opened upon her view one after the other on this side Cambridge. You cannot proceed a mile without starting a steeple, with its little patch of villagery round it, enverduring the waste. I don't know how you will pardon part of her letter being a transcript, but writing to another Lady first (probably as the *easiest task**) it was unnatural not to give you an accot of what had so freshly delighted her, and would have been a piece of transcendant rhetorick (above her modesty) to have given two different accounts of a simple and univocal pleasure. Bless me how learned I write! but I always forget myself when I write to Ladies. One cannot tame one's erudition down to their merely English apprehensions. But this and all other faults you will excuse from yours truly

C. LAMB.

Our kindest loves to Joanna, if she will accept it from us who are merely nominal to her, and to the child and child's parent. Yours again. C. L.

[*Mary Lamb adds this footnote:*]

* '*Easiest Task.*' Not the true reason, but Charles had so connected Coleridge & Cambridge in my mind, by talking so much of him there, and a letter coming so fresh from *him*, in a manner *that was the reason* I wrote to them first. I make this apology perhaps quite unnecessarily, but I am of a very jealous

temper myself, and more than once recollect having been offended at seeing kind expressions which had particularly pleased me in a friend's letter repeated word for word to another. —Farewell once more.

[I have no idea why this charming letter was held back when Talfourd copied the Lamb-Wordsworth correspondence. The name of the young man who showed the Lambs such courtesy is not known.

Coleridge's literary plans were destined to change. The *Biographia Literaria* was published alone in 1817, and *Sibylline Leaves* alone later in the same year. *Remorse* had been acted at Calne in June for the second time, a previous visit having been paid in 1813. Coleridge gave the manager a 'flaming testimonial.' Lady Beaumont was the wife of Sir George Beaumont.

Three Cambridge coaches at that time used the White Horse, Fetter Lane, as a terminus.

'Oliver Cromwell.' The portrait by Cooper, or possibly Lely, at Sidney Sussex College.

F. W. Franklin was with Lamb at Christ's Hospital. Afterwards he became Master of the Blue Coat School at Hertford. He is mentioned in the *Elia* essay on Christ's Hospital.]

275. CHARLES LAMB TO MATILDA BETHAM

DEAR MISS BETHAM, [P.M. *13th September 1815.*]

I am sorry to say that my sister has been taken with one of her violent illnesses, which was so sudden as to have shaken my health a great deal, and made it impossible for me to attend to your letter. I am naturally so indecisive, & this has quite taken all spirit of resolution from me, that I wish you to consult anybody else as to your notes & appendix, & beg you to let me transmit them for that purpose. I cannot give attention enough to judge of them. The plain text of the poem I will cheerfully supervise, but I greatly wish you would relieve me of the rest.

Your Mary is with me, but she must go now, as I think of taking lodgings & not returning home till I can get some very good servt. It would never do for us to be left at any time with such a one as she. I told Mary you would get her a country situation.

Yours sincerely

Wednesday. C. LAMB.

Kind remembces to all,—to Mr. Kenny.

[James Kenney (1780–1849), the dramatist, had married Holcroft's widow.]

276. TO MATILDA BETHAM

DR. MISS B., [No date: ? *16th September 1815.*]

Mr. Hunter has this morning put into a Parcel *all I have received from you* at various times, including a sheet of notes from the Printer and two fair sheets of *Mary*. I hope you will receive them safe. The poem I will continue to look over, but must request you to provide for the rest. I cannot attend to anything but the most simple things. I am very much unhinged indeed. Tell K. I saw Mrs. K. yesterday and she was well. You must write to Hunter if you are in a hurry for the notes &c.

Yours sincerely

C. L.

Saturday.

Shall I direct the Printer to send you fair sheets, as they are printed?

[Mr. Hunter was probably the bookseller of St. Paul's Churchyard.]

277. TO MATILDA BETHAM

DEAR MISS BETHAM, [No date: *1815.*]

That accursed word trill has vexed me excessively. I have referred to the MS. and certainly the printer is exonerated, it is much more like a *tr* than a *k*. But what shall I say of myself?

If you can trust me hereafter, I will be more careful. I will go thro' the Poem, unless you should feel more safe by doing it yourself. In fact a second person looking over a proof is liable to let pass anything that sounds plausible. The act of looking it over seeming to require only an attention to the words that they have the proper component letters, one scarce thinks then (or but half) of the sense.—You will find one line I have ventured to alter in 3ª sheet. You had made hope & yoke rhime, which is intolerable. Every body can see & carp at a bad rhime or no rhime. It strikes as slovenly, like bad spelling.

I found out another *sung* but I could not alter it, & I would not delay the time by writing to you. Besides it is not at all conspicuous—it comes in, by the bye, 'the strains I sung.' The other

obnoxious word was in an eminent place, at the beginning of her Lay, when all ears are upon her.

I must conclude hastily,

dear M. B.

Yours

C. L.

[Byron has, in *The Isles of Greece*:

Where burning Sappho loved and sung.]

278. TO MATILDA BETHAM

September 30, 1815.

I have altered that line to

That magic laugh bespeaks thee prest.

You had better consult Rogers about the *expence* of reprinting that sheet. An erratum there must be about *kill*.

DR MISS BETHAM,

Your letter has found me in such a distressed state of mind, owing partly to my situation at home and partly to perplexities at my office, that I am constrained to relinquish any further revision of *Marie*. The blunders I have already overlooked have weighed upon me almost insufferably. I have sent the Printer your copy as far as it is clear to 106 page. 'Happiness too great for me' is the last line of that page. The rest which I am not in any power to look over, being wretchedly ill, I send you back. I never was more ashamed of anything but my head has a weight on it that forces me to give it up. Pray forgive me and write to the Printer where you would have it sent in future.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

I have returned the Printer all the copy of the last [? first] sheets.

[Rogers was Samuel Rogers, the banker-poet, who later was to become the patron of Lamb's young publishing friend, Edward Moxon.]

279. TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: *1815*.

DR MISS BETHAM,

All this while I have been tormenting myself with the thought of having been ungracious to you, and you have been all the

while accusing yourself. Let us absolve one another & be quits. My head is in such a state from incapacity for business that I certainly know it to be my duty not to undertake the veriest trifle in addition. I hardly know how I can go on. I have tried to get some redress by explaining my health, but with no great success. No one can tell how ill I am, because it does not come out to the exterior of my face, but lies in my scull deep & invisible. I wish I was leprous & black jaundiced skin-over, and [? or] that all was as well within as my cursed looks. You must not think me worse than I am. I am determined not to be overset, but to give up business rather and get 'em to allow me a trifle for services past. O that I had been a shoe-maker or a baker, or a man of large independt fortune. O darling Laziness! heaven of Epicurus! Saint's Everlasting Rest! that I could drink vast potations of thee thro' unmeasured Eternity. Otium *cum* vel *sine* dignitate. Scandalous, dishonorable, any-kind-of-*repose*. I stand not upon the *dignified sort*. Accursed, damned desks, trade, commerce, business—Inventions of that old original busybody brainworking Satan, sabbathless restless Satan—

A curse relieves. Do you ever try it?

A strange Letter this to write to a Lady, but mere honey'd sentences will not distill. I dare not ask who revises in my stead. I have drawn you into a scrape and I am ashamed, but I know no remedy. My unwellness must be my apology. God bless you (tho' he curse the India House & fire it to the ground) and may no unkind Error creep into Marie. May all its readers like it as well as I do & everybody about you like its kind author no worse. Why the devil am I never to have a chance of scribbling my own free thoughts, verse or prose, again? Why must I write of Tea & Drugs & Price Goods & bales of Indigo—farewell.

C. LAMB.

[*Written at head of Letter on margin the following :*]

Mary goes to her Place on Sunday—I mean your maid, foolish Mary. She wants a very little brains only to be an excellent Serv. She is excellently calculated for the country, where nobody has brains.

[The two notes that follow were to William Ayrton (1777–1858), the critic and impresario and, until he met the Novellos, Lamb's link with music.]

280. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Oct. 4, 1815.

DEAR AYRTON,

I am confident that the word *air* in your sense does not occur in Spenser or Shakspeare, much less in older writers. The first trace I remember of it is in Milton's sonnet to Lawrence, 'Warble immortal verse and Tuscan air;' where, if the word had not been very newly familiarized, he would doubtless have used *airs* in the plural. Yours in haste,

C. L.

281. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Oct. 14, 1815.

DEAR A.,

Concerning 'Air'—Shakspeare Twelfth night has 'light airs & giddy recollections' I am sure I forget whereabouts—Also you will see another use of it in the Tempest (same sense) in Johnson's Dictionary. Spenser I still persist in, has it not, much less Chaucer. I have turned to all their places about music.

C. L.

No doubt we had it from the Italian *Aria*—now Aria is not the latin Æra modernized, but Aer, is it not?

[See *Twelfth Night*, II. iv. 5. *The Tempest* has 'Sounds and sweet airs' (III. ii. 145). The *Oxford Dictionary* is undecided about the derivation.]

282. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

Thursday 19 Oct. 1815.

My brother is gone to Paris.

DEAR MISS H.,

I am forced to be the replier to your Letter, for Mary has been ill and gone from home these five weeks yesterday. She has left me very lonely and very miserable. I stroll about, but there is no rest but at one's own fireside, and there is no rest for me there now. I look forward to the worse half being past, and keep up as well as I can. She has begun to show some favorable symptoms.

The return of her disorder has been frightfully soon this time, with scarce a six month's interval. I am almost afraid my worry of spirits about the E. I. House was partly the cause of her illness, but one always imputes it to the cause next at hand; more probably it comes from some cause we have no control over or conjecture of. It cuts sad great slices out of the time, the little time we shall have to live together. I don't know but the recurrence of these illnesses might help me to sustain her death better than if we had had no partial separations. But I won't talk of death. I will imagine us immortal, or forget that we are otherwise; by God's blessing in a few weeks we may be making our meal together, or sitting in the front row of the Pit at Drury Lane, or taking our evening walk past the theatres, to look at the outside of them at least, if not to be tempted in. Then we forget we are assailable, we are strong for the time as rocks, the wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs. Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla, I feel I hardly feel enough for him, my own calamities press about me and involve me in a thick integument not to be reached at by other folks' misfortunes. But I feel all I can, and all the kindness I can towards you all. God bless you. I hear nothing from Coleridge. Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Mary Lamb had recovered from her preceding attack in February. She did not recover from the present illness until December.

'The wind is tempered to the shorn Lambs.' '"But God tempers the wind," said Maria, "to the shorn lamb"' (Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*). Also in Henri Estienne (1594). Another form is in *Jacula Prudentum* (1640), by George Herbert: 'To a close shorn sheep, God gives wind by measure.'

'Poor C. Lloyd, and poor Priscilla.' Priscilla Wordsworth (*née* Lloyd) died this month, aged thirty-three. Charles Lloyd having just completed his translation of the tragedies of Alfieri, published in 1815, had been prostrated by a visitation of his malady so serious that he had to be placed in an asylum at York.

On 24th November 1815 Crabb Robinson called on Lamb, and they were later joined by Talfourd. This would be one of the occasions on which Talfourd collected the impressions of Lamb round about 1815, which he reproduced in his *Memorials* of Lamb in 1837.

It might be well to say here that the next letter is to be taken with salt.]

283. TO THOMAS MANNING

Dec. 25th, 1815.

DEAR OLD FRIEND AND ABSENTEE,

This is Christmas-day 1815 with us; what it may be with you I don't know, the 12th of June next year perhaps; and if it should be the consecrated season with you, I don't see how you can keep it. You have no turkeys; you would not desecrate the festival by offering up a withered Chinese bantam, instead of the savoury grand Norfolcian holocaust, that smokes all around my nostrils at this moment from a thousand firesides. Then what puddings have you? Where will you get holly to stick in your churches, or churches to stick your dried tea-leaves (that must be the substitute) in? What memorials you can have of the holy time, I see not. A chopped missionary or two may keep up the thin idea of Lent and the wilderness; but what standing evidence have you of the Nativity?—'tis our rosy-cheeked, homestalled divines, whose faces shine to the tune of *unto us a child*; faces fragrant with the mince-pies of half a century, that alone can authenticate the cheerful mystery—I feel.

I feel my bowels refreshed with the holy tide—my zeal is great against the unedified heathen. Down with the Pagodas—down with the idols—Ching-chong-fo and his foolish priesthood! Come out of Babylon, O my friend! for her time is come, and the child that is native, and the Proselyte of her gates, shall kindle and smoke together! And in sober sense what makes you so long from among us, Manning? You must not expect to see the same England again which you left.

Empires have been overturned, crowns trodden into dust, the face of the western world quite changed: your friends have all got old—those you left blooming—myself (who am one of the few that remember you) those golden hairs which you recollect my taking a pride in, turned to silvery and grey. Mary has been dead and buried many years—she desired to be buried in the silk gown you sent her. Rickman, that you remember active and strong, now walks out supported by a servant-maid and a stick. Martin Burney is a very old man. The other day an aged woman knocked at my door, and pretended to my acquaintance; it was long before I had the most distant cognition of her; but at

last together we made her out to be Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Topham, formerly Mrs. Morton, who had been Mrs. Reynolds, formerly Mrs. Kenney, whose first husband was Holcroft, the dramatic writer of the last century. St. Paul's Church is a heap of ruins; the Monument isn't half so high as you knew it, divers parts being successively taken down which the ravages of time had rendered dangerous; the horse at Charing Cross is gone, no one knows whither,—and all this has taken place while you have been settling whether Ho-hing-tong should be spelt with a —— or a ——. For aught I see you had almost as well remain where you are, and not come like a Struldbug into a world where few were born when you went away. Scarce here and there one will be able to make out your face; all your opinions will be out of date, your jokes obsolete, your puns rejected with fastidiousness as wit of the last age. Your way of mathematics has already given way to a new method, which after all is I believe the old doctrine of Maclaurin, new-vamped up with what he borrowed of the negative quantity of fluxions from Euler.

Poor Godwin! I was passing his tomb the other day in Cripplegate churchyard. There are some verses upon it written by Miss Hayes, which if I thought good enough I would send you. He was one of those who would have hailed your return, not with boisterous shouts and clamours, but with the complacent gratulations of a philosopher anxious to promote knowledge as leading to happiness—but his systems and his theories are ten feet deep in Cripplegate mould. Coleridge is just dead, having lived just long enough to close the eyes of Wordsworth, who paid the debt to nature but a week or two before. Poor Col., but two days before he died he wrote to a bookseller proposing an epic poem on the 'Wanderings of Cain,' in twenty-four books. It is said he has left behind him more than forty thousand treatises in criticism and metaphysics, but few of them in a state of completion. They are now destined, perhaps, to wrap up spices. You see what mutations the busy hand of Time has produced, while you have consumed in foolish voluntary exile that time which might have gladdened your friends — benefited your country; but reproaches are useless. Gather up the wretched reliques, my friend, as fast as you can, and come to your old home. I will rub my eyes and try to recognise you. We will

shake withered hands together, and talk of old things—of St. Mary's Church and the barber's opposite, where the young students in mathematics used to assemble. Poor Crisp, that kept it afterwards, set up a fruiterer's shop in Trumpington-street, and for aught I know, resides there still, for I saw the name up in the last journey I took there with my sister just before she died. I suppose you heard that I had left the India House, and gone into the Fishmongers' Almshouses over the bridge. I have a little cabin there, small and homely; but you shall be welcome to it. You like oysters, and to open them yourself; I'll get you some if you come in oyster time. Marshall, Godwin's old friend, is still alive, and talks of the faces you used to make.

Come as soon as you can. C. LAMB.

[Since Lamb's last letter Manning had entered Lhassa, the sacred city of Thibet, being the first Englishman to do so. He remained there until April 1812, when he returned to Calcutta. Then he took up his abode once more in Canton, and, in 1816, moved to Peking as interpreter to Lord Amherst's embassy, returning to England the following year.

'Norfolcian.' Manning was a Norfolk man, and Norfolk was (and still is) the chief source of supply of Christmas turkeys for the London market.

'Maclaurin.' Here Lamb surprises the reader by a reasonable remark. Colin Maclaurin, the mathematician, was the author of *A Treatise of Fluxions*. Euler's contributions to the subject are well known, and were mostly published by the St. Petersburg Academy from 1727 to 1783.

Coleridge actually had begun many years before an epic on the subject of the 'Wanderings of Cain.'

'St. Mary's Church.' At Cambridge.]

284. TO THOMAS MANNING

DEAR MANNING, *Dec. 26th, 1815.*

Following your brother's example, I have just ventured one letter to Canton, and am now hazarding another (not exactly a duplicate) to St. Helena. The first was full of unprobable romantic fictions, fitting the remoteness of the mission it goes upon; in the present I mean to confine myself nearer to truth as you come nearer home. A correspondence with the uttermost parts of the earth necessarily involves in it some heat of fancy; it sets the brain agoing; but I can think on the half-way house tranquilly. Your friends, then, are not all dead or grown forgetful of you through old age, as that lying letter asserted, antici-

pating rather what must happen if you kept tarrying on for ever on the skirts of creation, as there seemed a danger of your doing —but they are all tolerably well and in full and perfect comprehension of what is meant by Manning's coming home again. Mrs. Kenney (ci-devant Holcroft) never let her tongue run riot more than in remembrances of you. Fanny expends herself in phrases that can only be justified by her romantic nature. Mary reserves a portion of your silk, not to be buried in (as the false nuncio asserts), but to make up spick and span into a bran new gown to wear when you come. I am the same as when you knew me, almost to a surfeiting identity. This very night I am going to *leave off tobacco!* Surely there must be some other world in which this unconquerable purpose shall be realised. The soul hath not her generous aspirings implanted in her in vain. One that you knew, and I think the only one of those friends we knew much of in common, has died in earnest. Poor Priscilla, wife of Kit Wordsworth! Her brother Robert is also dead, and several of the grown-up brothers and sisters, in the compass of a very few years. Death has not otherwise meddled much in families that I know. Not but he has his damn'd eye upon us, and is w[h]etting his infernal feathered dart every instant, as you see him truly pictured in that impressive moral picture, 'The good man at the hour of death.' I have in trust to put in the post four letters from Diss, and one from Lynn, to St. Helena, which I hope will accompany this safe, and one from Lynn, and the one before spoken of from me, to Canton. But we all hope that these latter may be waste paper. I don't know why I have forborne writing so long. But it is such a forlorn hope to send a scrap of paper straggling over wide oceans. And yet I know when you come home, I shall have you sitting before me at our fireside just as if you had never been away. In such an instant does the return of a person dissipate all the weight of imaginary perplexity from distance of time and space! I'll promise you good oysters. Cory is dead, that kept the shop opposite St. Dunstan's, but the tougher materials of the shop survive the perishing frame of its keeper. Oysters continue to flourish there under as good auspices. Poor Cory! But if you will absent yourself twenty years together, you must not expect numerically the same population to congratulate your return which wetted the sea-

beach with their tears when you went away. Have you recovered the breathless stone-staring astonishment into which you must have been thrown upon learning at landing that an Emperor of France was living in St. Helena? What an event in the solitude of the seas! like finding a fish's bone at the top of Plinlimmon; but these things are nothing in our western world. Novelties cease to affect. Come and try what your presence can.

God bless you.—Your old friend, C. LAMB.

[Addressed]: Thomas Manning, Esq., St. Helena.

['The good man at the hour of death.' I have not found the picture to which Lamb refers. Probably a popular print of the day, or he may have been incorrectly remembering Blake's 'Death of the Good Old Man' in Blair's *Grave*.

Manning, by changing his plans, did not reach St. Helena when he expected to; not, indeed, until July 1817, when he met Napoleon.

On 12th February 1816 Crabb Robinson went to Drury Lane with Jane Collier and Mary Lamb to see *A New Way to pay Old Debts*.]

285. TO LEIGH HUNT

DEAR SIR, [P.M. 4 o'clock, *24th March* 1816.]

We were much gratified by the token of your remembrance, though we had read Rimini previously with great delight, & agree in thinking it superior to your former poems. The third Canto is in particular my favorite. We congratulate you most sincerely on the fruit of your prison hours. Mary joins me in kindest remembrances to Mrs. H. not forgetting our old grave friend.

[Leigh Hunt had been released from the Surrey Gaol in February 1815, and moved to the Vale of Health, where this note was addressed early in 1816. His new poem was *The Story of Rimini*. The word 'fruit' may also be a reference to his pride in his apple tree in his prison, and the 'grave friend' was little Thornton Leigh Hunt, whom, in the verses to him, Lamb called 'serious infant.']

286. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

DEAR WORDSWORTH, [Dated at end: *9th April 1816*.]

Thanks for the books you have given me and for all the Books you mean to give me. I will bind up the Political Sonnets and

Ode according to your Suggestion. I have not bound the poems yet. I wait till People have done borrowing them. I think I shall get a chain, and chain them to my shelves More Bodleiano, and People may come and read them at chain's length. For of those who borrow, some read slow, some mean to read but don't read, and some neither read nor meant to read, but borrow to leave you an opinion of their sagacity. I must do my money-borrowing friends the justice to say that there is nothing of this caprice or wantonness of alienation in them. When they borrow my money, they never fail to make use of it. Coleridge has been here about a fortnight. His health is tolerable at present, though beset with temptations. In the first place, the Cov. Gard. Manager has declined accepting his Tragedy, tho' (having read it) I see no reason upon earth why it might not have run a very fair chance, tho' it certainly wants a prominent part for a Miss O' Neil or a Mr. Kean. However he is going to day to write to Lord Byron to get it to Drury. Should you see Mrs. C., who has just written to C. a letter which I have given him, it will be as well to say nothing about its fate till some answer is shaped from Drury. He has two volumes printing together at Bristol, both finished as far as the composition goes; the latter containing his fugitive Poems, the former his Literary Life. Nature, who conducts every creature by instinct to its best end, has skilfully directed C. to take up his abode at a Chemist's Laboratory in Norfolk Street. She might as well have sent a Helluo Librorum for cure to the Vatican. God keep him inviolate among the traps and pitfalls. He has done pretty well as yet.

Tell Miss H. my sister is every day wishing to be quietly sitting down to answer her very kind Letter, but while C. stays she can hardly find a quiet time, God bless him.

Tell Mrs. W. her Postscripts are always agreeable. They are so legible too. Your manual graphy is terrible, dark as Lycophron. 'Likelihood' for instance is thus typified [*here Lamb makes an illegible scribble*].

I should not wonder if the constant making out of such Paragraphs is the cause of that weakness in Mrs. W.'s Eyes as she is tenderly pleased to express it. Dorothy I hear has mounted spectacles; so you have deoculated two of your dearest relations in life. Well, God bless you and continue to give you power to

write with a finger of power upon our hearts what you fail to impress in corresponding lucidness upon our outward eyesight.

Mary's Love to all, She is quite well.

I am call'd off to do the deposits on Cotton Wool—but why do I relate this to you who want faculties to comprehend the great mystery of Deposits, of Interest, of Warehouse rent, and Contingent Fund—Adieu. C. LAMB.

A longer Letter when C. is gone back into the Country, relating his success, &c.—*my* judgment of *your* new Books &c. &c.—I am scarce quiet enough while he stays.

Yours again

C. L.

Tuesday 9 Apr. 1816.

[Wordsworth had sent Lamb, presumably in proof (see Letter 288), *Thanksgiving Ode, January 18, 1816, with other short Pieces, chiefly referring to Recent Public Events*, 1816—the subject of the ode being the peace that had come upon Europe with the downfall of Napoleon.

'More Bodleiano.' According to Macray's *Annals of the Bodleian Library* (second edition, 1890, page 121), books seem to have been chained in the Bodleian Library up to 1751. The process of removing the chains seems to have begun in 1757. In 1761 as many as 1,448 books were unchained at a cost of ½d. apiece. A dozen years later discarded chains were sold at the rate of 2d. for a long chain, 1½d. for a short one, and if one hankered after a hundredweight of them, the wish could be gratified on payment of 14s. Many loose chains are still preserved in the library as relics. A recent book, *The Chained Library*, by Canon Streeter, develops the theme.

'For of those who borrow.' Lamb's *Elia* essay, 'The Two Races of Men,' may have had its germ in this passage.

'Helluo Librorum': A gormandizer of books. Burton uses the phrase in the *Anatomy*.

Coleridge came to London from Calne in March, bringing with him the manuscript of *Zapolya*. He had already had correspondence with Lord Byron concerning a tragedy for Drury Lane, on whose committee Byron had a seat, but he had done nothing towards writing it. *Zapolya* was published in 1817. Coleridge's lodgings were at 43 Norfolk Street, Strand. On 6th April 1816 Crabb Robinson met Mary Lamb just as he had returned from circuit, and took tea with her and Charles. He found Coleridge and Morgan at their house.

'Lycophron.' The Greek poet and grammarian, called 'Tenebrosus,' on account of the obscurity of his poem *Cassandra*.]

287. TO MATILDA BETHAM

[No date: *April 1816.*]

DEAR MISS BETHAM,

I received your present with mixed feelings of gratitude & shame. I look at it set forth so trim & ornate, & regret that I should have shrunk from the task of contributing to its exactness. But your mercy is above my faults. I stole a glance at the Errata & I do not know whether I were glad or sorry that that killing word that must ever stand against my conscience like the handwriting on the wall, did not stand alone. Well, I have nothing to do but to remit my offence as you have done & proceed tho' unworthy to the Perusal. Thanks again. Mary is middling. I am very so so. Dyer shall have his copy forthwith.

I remain, dear Miss B.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

Hope to talk it over with you soon.

[*The Lay of Marie* had just been published. A reference to Letters 277 and 278 will explain the 'killing word.']

288. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[*26th April 1816.*]

SIR,

PLEASE to state the Weights and Amounts of the following Lots of sold Sale, 181 for

Your obedient Servant,

CHAS. LAMB.

Accountant's Office,
26 Apr. 1816

DEAR W.

I have just finished the pleasing task of correcting the Revise of the Poems and letter. I hope they will come out faultless. One blunder I saw and shuddered at. The hallucinating rascal had printed *battered* for *battened,* this last not conveying any distinct sense to his gaping soul. The Reader (as they call 'em) had discovered it and given it the marginal brand, but the substitutory *n* had not yet appeared. I accompanied his notice

with a most pathetic address to the Printer not to neglect the Correction. I know how such a blunder would 'batter at your Peace.' [*'Batter' is written 'batten' and corrected to 'batter' in the margin.*] With regard to the works, the Letter I read with unabated satisfaction. Such a thing was wanted, called for. The parallel of Cotton with Burns I heartily approve; Iz. Walton hallows any page in which his reverend name appears. 'Duty archly bending to purposes of general benevolence' is exquisite. The Poems I endeavored not to understand, but to read them with my eye alone, and I think I succeeded. (Some people will do that when they come out, you'll say.) As if I were to luxuriate to-morrow at some Picture Gallery I was never at before, and going by to day by chance, found the door open, had but 5 minutes to look about me, peeped in, just such a *chastised* peep I took with my mind at the lines my luxuriating eye was coursing over unrestrained,—not to anticipate another day's fuller satisfaction. Coleridge is printing Xtabel, by Ld Byron's recommendation to Murray, with what he calls a vision, Kubla Khan—which said vision he repeats so enchantingly that it irradiates and brings heaven and Elysian bowers into my parlour while he sings or says it, but there is an observation 'Never tell thy dreams,' and I am almost afraid that Kubla Khan is an owl that won't bear day light, I fear lest it should be discovered by the lantern of typography and clear reducting to letters, no better than nonsense or no sense. When I was young I used to chant with extacy *Mild Arcadians ever blooming*, till somebody told me it was meant to be nonsense. Even yet I have a lingering attachment to it, and think it better than Windsor Forest, Dying Xtian's address &c.—C. has sent his Tragedy to D. L. T.—it cannot be acted this season, and by their manner of receiving it, I hope he will be able to alter it to make them accept it for next. He is at present under the medical care of a Mr. Gilman (Killman?) a Highgate Apothecary, where he plays at leaving off Laud—m. I think his essentials not touched: he is very bad, but then he wonderfully picks up another day, and his face when he repeats his verses hath its ancient glory, an Archangel a little damaged.

Will Miss H. pardon our not replying at length to her kind Letter? We are not quiet enough. Morgan is with us every day, going betwixt Highgate and the Temple. Coleridge is

absent but 4 miles, and the neighborhood of such a man is as exciting as the presence of 50 ordinary Persons. 'Tis enough to be within the whiff and wind of his genius, for us not to possess our souls in quiet. If I lived with him or the *author of the Excursion*, I should in a very little time lose my own identity, and be dragged along in the current of other people's thoughts, hampered in a net. How cool I sit in this office, with no possible interruption further than what I may term *material*; there is not as much metaphysics in 36 of the people here as there is in the first page of Locke's treatise on the Human understanding, or as much poetry as in any ten lines of the Pleasures of Hope or more natural Beggar's Petition. I never entangle myself in any of their speculations. Interruptions, if I try to write a letter even, I have dreadful. Just now within 4 lines I was call'd off for ten minutes to consult dusty old books for the settlement of obsolete Errors. I hold you a guinea you don't find the Chasm where I left off, so excellently the wounded sense closed again and was healed.

N.B. Nothing said above to the contrary but that I hold the personal presence of the two mentioned potent spirits at a rate as high as any, but I pay dearer, what amuses others robs me of myself, my mind is positively discharged into their greater currents, but flows with a willing violence. As to your question about work, it is far less oppressive to me than it was, from circumstances; it takes all the golden part of the day away, a solid lump from ten to four, but it does not kill my peace as before. Some day or other I shall be in a taking again. My head akes and you have had enough. God bless you.

C. LAMB.

[Lamb had been correcting the proofs of Wordsworth's *Letter to a Friend of Burns*, and his *Thanksgiving Ode, with other short Pieces*, both published in 1816. In the *Letter to a Friend of Robert Burns*, which was called forth by the intended republication of Burns's life by Dr. Currie, Wordsworth incidentally compares Burns and Cotton. The phrase which Lamb commends is in the description of *Tam o' Shanter* (page 22): 'This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality. . . .'

Coleridge's *Christabel* (with *Kubla Khan* and *The Pains of Sleep*) was published by Murray in 1816. It ran into a second edition quickly, but was not too well received. The *Edinburgh* indeed described it as destitute of one ray of genius. In a letter from Fanny Godwin to Mary Shelley, 20th July 1816, in Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, we read that 'Lamb says *Christabel* ought never to have been published; and that no one understood it, and *Kubla Khan* is nonsense.' But this was probably idle gossip. Lamb had admired *Christabel* to the full, but he may have thought its publication in an incomplete state an error.

Coleridge was introduced to Mr. James Gillman of the Grove, Highgate, by Dr. Adams of Hatton Garden, to whom he had applied for medical aid. Adams suggested that Gillman should take Coleridge into his house. Gillman arranged on 11th April that Adams should bring Coleridge on the following day. Coleridge went alone and conquered. He promised to begin domestication on the next day, and 'I looked with impatience,' wrote Gillman in his *Life of Coleridge* 'for the morrow . . . I felt indeed almost spellbound, without the desire of release.' Coleridge did not come on the morrow, but two days later. He remained with the Gillmans for the rest of his life.

The Pleasures of Hope, by Thomas Campbell; *The Beggar's Petition*—'Pity the sorrows of a poor old man'—by Thomas Moss (1808), a poem to be found in many recitation books. Lamb alluded to it in the *London Magazine* version of his *Elia* essay, 'A Complaint of the Decay of Beggars.'

'Mild Arcadians.' From Pope's *Song by a Person of Quality*.

'Whiff and wind.' See *Hamlet*, II. ii. 495.]

289. TO LEIGH HUNT

[*13th May 1816.*]

DEAR SIR,

I thank you much for the Curious Volume of Southey, which I return, together with Falstaff's Letters, Elgin Stone Report, & a little work of my own, of which perhaps you have no copy & I have a great many.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[In Hunt's hand below:

'Received from C. Lamb 13th May 1816—

L. H.'

Southey's 'curious volume' might have been the *Omniana*, published in 1812, and followed later by *The Doctor*. The Elgin Stone Report was that drawn up by a select committee of the House of Commons appointed in 1816 to inquire into the desirability of purchasing the Elgin Marbles, as they are more commonly called, for the nation. They are now in the British Museum. Public opinion in their favour was much influenced by the impassioned advocacy of Benjamin Robert Haydon, whom Lamb knew. What book of Lamb's is referred to I cannot say.]

290. TO MATILDA BETHAM

DEAR MISS BETHAM, [Dated at end: *1st June 1816.*]

I have sent your *very pretty lines* to Southey in a frank as you requested. Poor S. what a grievous loss he must have had! Mary and I rejoice in the prospect of seeing you soon in town. Let *us* be among the very first persons you come to see. Believe me that you can have no friends who respect and love you more than ourselves. Pray present our kind remembrances to Barbara, and to all to whom you may think they will be acceptable.

Yours very sincerely,

C. LAMB.

Have you seen *Christabel* since its publication?

E. I. H. June 1 1816.

[Southey's eldest son Herbert had died on 17th April of this year.

It was on the night of 15th June 1816 that Fanny Kelly was fired at by a lunatic named George Barnett during the performance at Covent Garden, some of the shot falling into the lap of Mary Lamb, who was with her brother in the pit.]

291. TO HENRY DODWELL

MY DEAR FELLOW, [*5th July 1816.*]

I have been in a lethargy this long while, and forgotten London, Westminster, Marybone, Paddington—they all went clean out of my head, till happening to go to a neighbor's in this good borough of Calne, for want of whist players, we fell upon *Commerce:* the word awoke me to a remembrance of my professional avocations and the long-continued strife which I have been these 24 years endeavoring to compose between those grand Irreconcileables Cash and Commerce; I instantly called for an almanack, which with some difficulty was procured at a fortune-teller's in the vicinity (for the happy holyday people here having nothing to do, keep no account of time), and found that by dint of duty I must attend in Leadenhall on Wednesy. morning next, and shall attend accordingly. Does Master Hannah give macaroons still, and does he fetch the Cobbetts from my Attic? Perhaps it wouldn't be too much trouble for him to drop the inclosed up at

my aforesaid Chamber, and any letters, etc., with it; but the inclosed should go without delay. *N.B.*—He isn't to fetch Monday's Cobbett, but it is to wait my reading when I come back. Heigh Ho! Lord have mercy upon me, how many does two and two make? I am afraid I shall make a poor clerk in future, I am spoiled with rambling among haycocks and cows and pigs. Bless me! I had like to have forgot (the air is so temperate and oblivious here) to say I have seen your brother, and hope he is doing well in the finest spot of the world. More of these things when I return. Remember me to the gentlemen,—I forget names. Shall I find all my letters at my rooms on Tuesday? If you forgot to send 'em never mind, for I don't much care for reading and writing now; I shall come back again by degrees, I suppose, into my former habits. How is Bruce de Ponthieu, and Porcher and Co.?—the tears come into my eyes when I think how long I have neglected ——.

Adieu! ye fields, ye shepherds and —herdesses, and dairies and cream-pots, and fairies and dances upon the green.

I come, I come. Don't drag me so hard by the hair of my head, Genius of British India! I know my hour is come, Faustus must give up his soul, O Lucifer, O Mephistopheles! Can you make out what all this letter is about? I am afraid to look it over.

CH. LAMB.

Calne, Wilts, Friday, July something, old style, 1816.

No new style here, all the styles are old, and some of the gates too for that matter.

[Addressed] H. Dodwell, Esq., India House, London.

In his absence may be opened by Mr. Chambers.

[Henry Dodwell was in the Accountant General's Department at the East India House.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'I have dated the letter 5th July because in Crabb Robinson's diary we find that on 11th July he called on Lamb "who has brought me from Mr. Morgan's some German books I had lent Coleridge." This shows that it must have been Wednesday, 10th July that Lamb was due back at the India House, & he must have written to Dodwell on Friday, 5th July. Lamb can have had only a bare four weeks' holiday, since H. C. R. mentions calling on him on 11th June (a Tuesday).'

'Bruce de Ponthieu,' etc. India House jokes, I assume.

On 13th July 1816 Crabb Robinson took to Miss Lamb as a present the

print of Leonardo's 'Virgin of the Rocks' (now in the National Gallery), and both she and her brother (each of whom had written a poem about it) were much pleased, but Lamb insisted that the frame should be changed to black to suit all his other pictures. Later in the day Robinson returned for whist and found Edward White, an East India House colleague of Lamb's, also there.]

292. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *23rd September 1816.*]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

It seems an age since we have corresponded, but indeed the interim has been stuffd out with more variety than usually checquers my same-seeming existence.—Mercy on me, what a traveller have I been since I wrote you last! what foreign wonders have been explored! I have seen Bath, King Bladud's ancient well, fair Bristol, seed-plot of suicidal Chatterton, Marlbro', Chippenham, Calne, famous for nothing in particular that I know of—but such a vertigo of locomotion has not seized us for years. We spent a month with the Morgans at the last named Borough—August—and such a change has the change wrought in us that we could not stomach wholesome Temple air, but are absolutely rusticating (O the gentility of it) at Dalston, about one mischievous boy's stone's throw off Kingsland Turnpike, one mile from Shoreditch church,—thence we emanate in various directions to Hackney, Clapton, Totnam, and such like romantic country. That my lungs should ever prove so dainty as to fancy they perceive differences of air! but so it is, tho' I am almost ashamed of it, like Milton's devil (turn'd truant to his old Brimstone) I am purging off the foul air of my once darling tobacco in this Eden, absolutely snuffing up pure gales, like old worn out Sin playing at being innocent, which never comes again, for in spite of good books and good thoughts there is something in a Pipe that virtue cannot give tho' she give her unendowed person for a dowry.

Have you read the review of Coleridge's character, person, physiognomy &c. in the Examiner—his features even to his *nose* —O horrible license beyond the old Comedy. He is himself gone to the sea side with his favorite Apothecary, having left for publication as I hear a prodigious mass of composition for a Sermon to the middling ranks of people to persuade them they

are not so distressed as is commonly supposed. Methinks he should recite it to a congregation of Bilston Colliers,—the fate of Cinna the Poet would instantaneously be his. God bless him, but certain that rogue-Examiner has beset him in most unmannerly strains. Yet there is a kind of respect shines thro' the disrespect that to those who know the rare compound (that is the subject of it) almost balances the reproof, but then those who know him but partially or at a distance are so extremely apt to drop the qualifying part thro' their fingers. The 'after all, Mr. Wordsworth is a man of great talents, if he did not abuse them' comes so dim upon the eyes of an Edinbro' review reader, that have been gloating-open chuckle-wide upon the preceding detail of abuses, it scarce strikes the pupil with any consciousness of the letters being there, like letters writ in lemon. There was a cut at me a few months back by the same hand, but my agnomen or agni-nomen not being calculated to strike the popular ear, it dropt anonymous, but it was a pretty compendium of observation, which the author has collected in my disparagement, from some hundreds of social evenings which we had spent together,—however in spite of all, there is something tough in my attachment to H—— which these violent strainings cannot quite dislocate or sever asunder. I get no conversation in London that is absolutely worth attending to but his. There is monstrous little sense in the world, or I am monstrous clever, or squeamish or something, but there is nobody to talk to—to talk *with* I should say—and to go talking to one's self all day long is too much of a good thing, besides subjecting one to the imputation of being out of one's senses, which does no good to one's temporal interest at all.

By the way, I have seen Colerge. but once this 3 or 4 months. He is an odd person, when he first comes to town he is quite hot upon visiting, and then he turns off and absolutely never comes at all, but seems to forget there are any such people in the world. I made one attempt to visit him (a morning call) at Highgate, but there was something in him or his apothecary which I found so unattractively-repulsing-from any temptation to call again, that I stay away as naturally as a Lover visits. The rogue gives you Love Powders, and then a strong horse drench to bring 'em off your stomach that they mayn't hurt you.

I was very sorry the printing of your Letter was not quite to your mind, but I surely did not think but you had arranged the manner of breaking the paragraphs from some principle known to your own mind, and for some of the Errors, I am confident that Note of Admiration in the middle of two words did not stand so when I had it, it must have dropt out and been replaced wrong, so odious a blotch could not have escaped me. Gifford (whom God curse) has persuaded squinting Murray (whom may God not bless) not to accede to an offer Field made for me to print 2 vols. of Essays, to include the one on Hogrth. and 1 or 2 more, but most of the matter to be new, but I dare say I should never have found time to make them; M. would have had 'em, but shewed specimens from the Reflector to G——, as he acknowleged to Field, and Crispin did for me. 'Not on his soal but on his soul, damn'd Jew' may the malediction of my eternal antipathy light.

We desire much to hear from you, and of you all, including Miss Hutchinson, for not writing to whom Mary feels a weekly (and did for a long time feel a daily) Pang. How is Southey?—I hope his pen will continue to move many years smoothly and continuously for all the rubs of the rogue Examiner. A pertinacious foul-mouthed villain it is!

This is written for a rarity at the seat of business: it is but little time I can generally command from secular calligraphy — the pen seems to know as much and makes letters like figures—an obstinate clerkish thing. It shall make a couplet in spite of its nib before I have done with it,

'and so I end
Commending me to your love, my dearest friend.'

from Leaden Hall, Septemr something, 1816

C. LAMB.

[The Lambs had taken summer lodgings—at 14 Kingsland Row, Dalston—which they retained for some years. See the first paragraph of the first *Elia* essay for an echo.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'I have been struck by Lamb's attraction for the name August. In this letter he says: "We spent a month with the Morgans at the last-named borough—August . . ." whereas we have seen that it was June and July. Again, when he wrote to Allsop about being one of his executors he dated the letter 9th August, whereas it was postmarked 9th *September*. Again, the letter to J. B. Dibdin, postmarked 2nd October 1827, was dated by Lamb

2nd August. Again, in letter to Ollier, autumn of 1826, he asks for the *New Monthly*, which contained his essay on Sulkiness (which had appeared in the September number) "which I had not about July or August last."'

Hazlitt's article on Coleridge was in the *Examiner* for 8th September. Among other things Hazlitt said: 'Mr. Shandy would have settled the question at once: "You have little or no nose, Sir."'

One passage in the article gives colour to the theory that Hazlitt occasionally borrowed from Lamb's conversation. In Lamb's letter to Wordsworth of 26th April 1816, he has the celebrated description of Coleridge, 'an archangel a little damaged.' Hazlitt in this article writes: 'If he had had but common moral principle, that is, sincerity, he would have been a great man; nor hardly, as it is, appears to us:

'Less than arch-angel ruined, and the excess
Of glory obscur'd.'

Hazlitt may have heard Lamb's epithet, backed probably by the same passage from *Paradise Lost*.

Crabb Robinson tells us, in his *Diary*, that Coleridge was less hurt by the article than he anticipated. 'He denies H., however, originality, and ascribes to L. [Lamb] the best ideas in H.'s articles. He was not displeased to hear of his being knocked down by John Lamb lately.'

Coleridge's new work was *The Statesman's Manual; or, the Bible the best Guide to Political Skill and Foresight: A Lay Sermon*, 1816. It had been first announced as 'A Lay Sermon on the Distresses of the Country, addressed to the Middle and Higher Orders,' and Hazlitt's article had been in the nature of an anticipatory review.

The 'cut.' Mrs. Anderson notes that P. P. Howe gives it in his *Life of Hazlitt*, page 209: 'The "cut" at him was shared by Hunt's "The Lay of the Laureate": "This article falls somewhat short of its original destination, by our having been forced to omit two topics, the praise of Buonaparte, and the abuse of poetry. The former we leave to history: the latter we have been induced to omit from our regard to two poets of our acquaintance. We must say they have spoiled sport. One of them [Hunt] has tropical blood in his veins, which gives a gay, cordial, vinous spirit to his whole character. The other is a mad wag—who ought to have lived at the court of Horwendillus, with Yorick and Hamlet—equally desperate in his mirth and his gravity, who would laugh at a funeral and weep at a wedding, who talks nonsense to prevent the headache, who would wag his finger at a skeleton, whose jests scald like tears, who makes a joke of a great man, and a hero of a cat's paw."'

'Cinna the poet.' See *Julius Cæsar*, III. iii. 32: 'Tear him for his bad verses.'

'Agni-nomen.' From *agnus*, a lamb.

'After all, Mr. Wordsworth . . .' The *Edinburgh Review* article on *The Excursion*, in November 1814, beginning, 'This will never do,' had at least two lapses into fairness: 'But the truth is, that Mr. Wordsworth, with all his perversities, is a person of great powers'; and 'Nobody can be more disposed to do justice to the great powers of Mr. Wordsworth than we are.'

'The printing of your Letter.' The *Letter to a Friend of Burns* (see above).

'2 vols. of Essays.' These were printed with poems as *The Works of Charles Lamb* by the Olliers in 1818 (see later).

'Crispin.' Gifford (see note to the letter to Wordsworth, No. 263).

'Southey.' Hazlitt's attacks on the Laureate were continuous.]

293. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

[No date: *Middle of November 1816.*]

Inner Temple.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I have procured a frank for this day, and having been hindered all the morning have no time left to frame excuses for my long and inexcusable silence, and can only thank you for the very kind way in which you overlook it. I should certainly have written on the receipt of yours but I had not a frank, and also I wished to date my letter from my own home where you expressed so cordial a wish to hear we had arrived. We have passed ten, I may call them very good weeks, at Dalston, for they completely answered the purpose for which we went. Reckoning our happy month at Calne, we have had quite a rural summer, and have obtained a very clear idea of the great benefit of quiet—of early hours and time intirely at one's own disposal, and no small advantages these things are; but the return to old friends—the sight of old familiar faces round me has almost reconciled me to occasional headachs and fits of peevish weariness—even London streets, which I sometimes used to think it hard to be eternally doomed to walk through before I could see a green field, seem quite delightful.

Charles smoked but one pipe while we were at Dalston and he has not transgressed much since his return. I hope he will only smoke now with his fellow-smokers, which will give him five or six clear days in the week.

Shame on me, I did not even write to thank you for the bacon, upon which, and some excellent eggs your sister added to her kind present, we had so many nice feasts.

I have seen Henry Robinson, who speaks in raptures of the days he passed with you. He says he never saw a man so happy in *three wives* as Mr. Wordsworth is. I long to join you and make a fourth, and we cannot help talking of the possibility in some future fortunate summer of venturing to come so far, but we

generally end in thinking the possibility impossible, for I dare not come but by post chaises, and the expence would be enormous, yet it was very pleasing to read Mrs. Wordsworth's kind invitation and to feel a kind of latent hope of what might one day happen.

You ask how Coleridge maintains himself. I know no more than you do. Strange to say, I have seen him but once since he has been at Highgate, and then I met him in the street.

I have just been reading your kind letter over again and find you had some doubt whether we had left the Temple entirely. It was merely a lodging we took to recruit our health and spirits. From the time we left Calne Charles drooped sadly, company became quite irksome, and his anxious desire to leave off smoking, and his utter inability to perform his daily resolutions against it, became quite a torment to him, so I prevailed with him to try the experiment of change of scene, and set out in one of the short stage coaches from Bishopsgate Street, Miss Brent and I, and we looked over all the little places within three miles and fixed on one quite countrified and not two miles from Shoreditch Church, and entered upon it the next day. I thought if we stayed but a week it would be a little rest and respite from our troubles, and we made a ten weeks stay, and very comfortable we were, so much so that if ever Charles is superannuated on a small pension, which is the great object of his ambition, and we felt our income straitened, I do think I could live in the country entirely—at least I thought so while I was there but since I have been at home I wish to live and die in the Temple where I was born. We left the trees so green it looked like early autumn, and can see but one leaf 'The last of its clan' on our poor old Hare Court trees. What a rainy summer!—and yet I have been so much out of town and have made so much use of every fine day that I can hardly help thinking it has been a fine summer. We calculated we walked three hundred and fifty miles while we were in our country lodging. One thing I must tell you, Charles came round every morning to a shop near the Temple to get shaved.

Last Sunday we had such a pleasant day, I must tell you of it. We went to Kew and saw the old Palace where the King was brought up, it was the pleasantest sight I ever saw, I can scarcely tell you why, but a charming old woman shewed it to us. She

had lived twenty six years there and spoke with such a hearty love of our good old King, whom all the world seems to have forgotten, that it did me good to hear her. She was as proud in pointing out the plain furniture (and I am sure you are now sitting in a larger and better furnished room) of a small room in which the King always dined, nay more proud of the simplicity of her royal master's taste, than any shower of Carlton House can be in showing the fine things there, and so she was when she made us remark the smallness of one of the Princesses' bedrooms, and said she slept and also dressed in that little room. There are a great many good pictures but I was most pleased with one of the King when he was about two years old, such a pretty little white-headed boy.

I cannot express how much pleasure a letter from you gives us. If I could promise my self I should be always as well as I am now, I would say I will be a better correspondent in future. If Charles has time to add a line I shall be less ashamed to send this hasty scrawl. Love to all and every one. How much I should like once more to see Miss Wordsworth's handwriting, if she would but write a postscript to your next, which I look to receive in a few days.

Yours affectionately

M. LAMB.

[*Charles Lamb adds at the head :*]

Mary has barely left me room to say How d'ye. I have received back the Examiner containing the delicate enquiry into certain infirm parts of S. T. C.'s character. What is the general opinion of it? Farewell. My love to all.

C. LAMB.

['Miss Brent.' Mrs. Morgan's sister.

Crabb Robinson had been in the Lake Country in September and October.

'The last of its clan.' From Coleridge's *Christabel*.

'To a shop near the Temple.' Possibly to Mr. A——m of Flower-de-Luce Court, mentioned by Lamb in the footnote to his essay 'On the Melancholy of Tailors.'

'Our good old King.' George III, then in retirement. The house is preserved very much as in those royal days, for all to see. Carlton House was the home of the Regent, whom Lamb (and probably his sister) detested.]

294. MARY LAMB TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

MY DEAR MISS HUTCHINSON, [No date: *? Late 1816.*]

I had intended to write you a long letter, but as my frank is dated I must send it off with a bare acknowledgment of the receipt of your kind letter. One question I must hastily ask you. Do you think Mr. Wordsworth would have any reluctance to write (strongly recommending to their patronage) to any of his rich friends in London to solicit employment for Miss Betham as a Miniature Painter? If you give me hopes that he will not be averse to do this, I will write to you more fully stating the infinite good he would do by performing so irksome a task as I know asking favours to be. In brief, she has contracted debts for printing her beautiful poem of 'Marie,' which like all things of original excellence does not sell at all.

These debts have led to little accidents unbecoming a woman and a poetess to suffer. Retirement with such should be voluntary.

[*Charles Lamb adds :*]

The Bell rings. I just snatch the Pen out of my sister's hand to finish rapidly. Wordsw^th^. may tell De Q that Miss B's price for a Virgin and Child is three guineas.

Yours (all of you) ever

C. L.

['De Q.' Thomas De Quincey (1785–1859), the 'Opium-eater,' then living at Grasmere. Lamb and De Quincey had first met in 1804; but it was not until 1821 that they became really intimate, when Lamb introduced him to the *London Magazine*.

Miss Betham painted miniature portraits, among others, of Mrs. S. T. Coleridge and Sara Coleridge; also of Randal Norris.]

295. CHARLES LAMB TO LEIGH HUNT

DEAR HUNT, [Dated at end: *7th December 1816.*]

It gave me great pain to find that you probably staid at home on Sunday last upon my making a kind of promise to come. I thought you were always at home on that day & did not consider

my failing as likely to inconvenience you at all. The fact is I have been very unwell, suffering from an intense cold, & having grown somewhat effeminate from country hours find myself less able than ever to return to London ones. Night air & late going to bed kill me.

I hope you will forgive me & allow me to come when I get a little better, which I hope will not be long. Your kindness expressed towards me in so public & yet so private a way—and VERSES too—make me ashamed of my seeming ingratitude. Believe me they were not lost upon me. You are often in my recollections. There is not a shadow of misunderstanding left I hope on either side. My sister joins in kind rememb^ces & means to join me in personal apology.

Believe me very kindly yours

C. LAMB.

[Leigh Hunt's verses, which appeared in the *Examiner* on 25th August 1816, are quoted, in part, earlier. See page 121.]

296. TO JOHN RICKMAN

December 30, 1816.

DEAR R.,

Your goose found her way into our Larder with infinite discretion. Judging by her Giblets which we have sacrificed first, she is a most sensible Bird. Mary bids me say, first, that she thanks you for your remembrance, next that Mr. Norris and his family are no less indebted to you as the cause of his reverend and amiable visage being perpetuated when his Soul is flown. Finding nothing like a Subscription going on for the unhappy Lady, and not knowing how to press an actual Sum upon her, she hit upon the expedient of making believe that Mr. N. wanted his miniature (which his chops did seem to water after, I must confess, when 'twas first proposed, though with a *Nolo Pingier* for modesty), and the likeness being completed, your £5 is to go as from him. This I must confess is robbing Peter, or like the equitable distribution in Alexander's Feast, 'Love was crowned' though somebody else 'won the cause.' And Love himself, smiling Love, he might have sat for, so complacent he sat as he used to sit when in his days of Courtship he ogled thro'

his Spectacles. I have a shrewd suspicion he has an Eye upon his Spouse's picture after this, and probably some collateral branches may follow of the Norris or Faint Stock, so that your forerunner may prove a notable Decoy duck. The Colliers are going to sit. Item, her knightly Brother in Ireland is soon coming over, apprized of her difficulties, and I confidently hope an emergence for her. But G. Dyer Executor to a Nobleman! G. D. Residuary Legatee! What whirligig of Fortune is this? *Valet ima Summis.* Strange world, strange kings, strange composition!—I can't enjoy it sufficiently till I get a more active belief in it. You've seen the will of Ld. Stanhope. Conceive his old floor strew'd with *disjecta membra Poeseōs*, now loaden with codicils, deeds of Trust, Letters of attorney, Bonds, obligations, Forfeitures, Exchequer Bills, Noverint Universi's. 'Mr. Serjeant Best, pray take my arm-chair. My Lord Holland sit here, Lord Grantly will your Lordship take the other? Mr. Jekyll, excuse my offering you the window seat—We'll now have that clause read over again.'

B. and Fletcher describe a little French Lawyer spoilt by an accidental duel he got thrust into, from a Notable Counsellor turned into a Bravo. Here is G. D. more contra-naturally metamorphosed. My life on it, henceforth he explodes his old Hobby Horses. No more poring into Cambridge records—here are other Title deeds to be looked into—Now can he make any Joan a Lady. And if he don't get too proud to marry, that long unsolved Problem of G. D. is in danger of being quickly melted. They can't choose but come and make offer of their coy wares. I see Miss H. prim up her chin, Miss B-n-j-o cock her nose and Miss ——.

He throws his dirty glove. G. D., *Iratis Veneribus*, marries, for my life on't.

And 'tis odds in that case but he leaves off making Love and Verses.

Indeed I look upon our friend as dead, dead to all his desperate fancies, pleasures,—he has lost the dignity of verse, the dignity of poverty, the dignity of digging on in desperation through mines of Literature that yielded nothing. Adieu! the wrinkled brow, the chin half shaved, the Ruined arm-chair, the wind-admitting and expelling screen, the fluttering Pamphlets, the

lost Letters, the documents never to be found when wanting, the unserviceable comfortable Landress.

G. D.'s occupation's o'er!

Demptus per vim mentis gratissimus Error!

Hæc pauca de amico nostro antiquo accipe pro næniis, exequiis, et ejusdem generis aliis. Vale noster G. D.

From yours as he was, unchanged by Fortune,

C. L.

John Rickman, Esq., New Palace Yard, Westminster.

[This letter refers to Matilda Betham's portrait of Randal Norris, the Lambs' old friend and Librarian of the Inner Temple. Mrs. Norris had been a Miss Faint of Widford. *Nolo Pingier:* 'I refuse to be painted.'

George Dyer, who had been tutor in the family of the third Earl of Stanhope (Citizen Stanhope), was one of the ten executors to whom that peer's estate was left, after paying a few legacies. Among them was another of Lamb's acquaintances, Joseph Jekyll, mentioned in the *Elia* essay on the Old Benchers. Dyer repudiated the office, but the heir persuaded him to accept an annuity. *Valet ima Summis:* 'The god can interchange the highest and the lowest.' Horace, *Odes*, I. xxxiv. 12.

'*Disjecta membra Poeseōs*': Dismembered limbs of poetry. After Horace, *Satires*, I. iv. 62.

Miss H. was, I think, Mary Hayes, and Miss B-n-j-o, Elizabeth Benger, both of whom we have met. As it happened, Dyer was to marry someone, but not either of these. *Iratis Veneribus:* 'In spite of the anger of his loves.'

'Adieu,' etc. Parodying *Othello*.

The English of the last sentences is, after 'occupation's o'er': A most pleasing mental aberration is taken away by force. Receive these few words about our old friend in place of lamentations, funeral ceremonies, and such-like. The Latin line is again from Horace, *Epistles*, II. ii. 140.

On 11th February 1817 Lamb was present at the annual dinner of the Amicable Society of Blues—or old Christ's Hospital boys.]

297. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Friday, Ap. 18, 1817.

DEAR A.,

I am in your debt for a very delightful evening—I should say two—but Don Giovanni in particular was exquisite, and I am almost inclined to allow Music to be one of the Liberal Arts; which before I doubted. Could you let me have 3 Gallery Tickets—don't be startled—they shall positively be the last—

or 2 or 1—for the same, for to-morrow or Tuesday. They will be of no use for to-morrow if not put in the post *this day* address to me, Mr Lamb, India House; if for any other evening, your usual blundering direction, No. 3 Middle Temple instead of 4 Inner Temple Lane will do. Yours, CH. LAMB.

298. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Temple 12 May 1817.

My dear friend—
Before I end—
Have you any
More orders for Don Giovanni
To give
Him that doth live
Your faithful Zany?

Without raillery
I mean Gallery
ones.
For I am a person that shuns
All ostentation,
And being at the top of the fashion,
And seldom go to operas
But in formâ Pauperis.
I go to the Play
In a very economical sort of way,
Rather to see
Than be seen.
Though I'm no ill sight
Neither
By candle light
And in some kinds of weather.
You might pit me
For height
Against Kean.
But in a grand tragic scene
I'm nothing.

It would create a kind of loathing
To see me act Hamlet.
There'd be many a damn let
Fly
At my presumption
If I should try
Being a fellow of no gumption.
By the way, tell me candidly how you relish
This which they call the lapidary
Style?
Opinions vary.
The late Mr. Mellish
Could never abide it.
He thought it vile,
And coxcombical.
My friend the Poet Laureat,
Who is a great lawyer at
Any thing comical,
Was the first who tried it,
But Mellish could never abide it.
But it signifies very little what Mellish said,
Because he is dead.
For who can confute
A body that's mute?
Or who would fight
With a senseless sprite?
Or think of troubling
An impenetrable old goblin
That's dead and gone
And stiff as a stone
To convince him with arguments pro & con
As if he were some live logician
Bred up at Merton,
Or Mr. Hazlitt the Metaphysician?
Ha! Mr. Ayrton,
With all your rare tone,

For tell me how should an apparition
List to your call,

Though you talk'd for ever
Ever so clever,
When his ear itself
By which he must hear or not hear at all
Is laid on the shelf?
Or put the case
(For more grace)
[If] it were a female spectre,
How could you expect her
To take much gust
In long speeches,
With her tongue as dry as dust,
In a sandy place,
Where no peaches,
Nor lemons, nor limes, nor oranges hang,
To drop on the drouth of an arid harangue,
Or quench
With their sweet drench
The fiery pangs which the worms inflict
With their endless nibblings,
Like quibblings,
Which the corpse may dislike but can ne'er contradict?
Ha! Mr. Ayrton!
With all your rare tone—
I am
C. LAMB.

[The original of this letter, in which are many changes of mind, is now in America. I have done my best to make a good text.

'Rather to see.' Ovid's ladies went to the play for both purposes. *Art of Love*, I. 99.

'You might pit me for height against Kean.' This was so. Edmund Kean was small in stature, though not so 'immaterially' built as Lamb is said to have been.

The Laureate, Southey, had first tried the lapidary style in *Gooseberry Pie*; later, without rhymes, in *Thalaba*.

'Mr. Mellish.' Possibly the Joseph Charles Mellish who translated Schiller.

'Merton.' Hartley Coleridge was then at this college.

Some time in the intervening three months before the next letter the Lambs went to Brighton for their holiday.]

299. TO BARRON FIELD

MY DEAR BARRON, *Aug. 31st, 1817.*

The bearer of this letter so far across the seas is Mr. Lawrey, who comes out to you as a missionary, and whom I have been strongly importuned to recommend to you as a most worthy creature by Mr. Fenwick, a very old, honest friend of mine, of whom, if my memory does not deceive me, you have had some knowledge heretofore as editor of the 'Statesman'—a man of talent, and patriotic. If you can show him any facilities in his arduous undertaking, you will oblige us much. Well, and how does the land of thieves use you? and how do you pass your time in your extra-judicial intervals? Going about the streets with a lantern, like Diogenes, looking for an honest man? You may look long enough, I fancy. Do give me some notion of the manners of the inhabitants where you are. They don't thieve all day long, do they? No human property could stand such continuous battery. And what do they do when they an't stealing?

Have you got a theatre? What pieces are performed? Shakespear's, I suppose—not so much for the poetry, as for his having once been in danger of leaving his country on account of certain 'small deer.'

Have you poets among you? Cursed plagiarists, I fancy, if you have any. I would not trust an idea or a pocket-handkerchief of mine among 'em. You are almost competent to answer Lord Bacon's problem, whether a nation of atheists can subsist together. You are practically in one:—

> So thievish 'tis, that the eighth commandment itself
> Scarce seemeth there to be.

Our old honest world goes on with little perceptible variation.

Of course you have heard of poor Mitchell's death, and that G. Dyer is one of Lord Stanhope's residuaries. I am afraid he has not touched much of the residue yet. He is positively as lean as Cassius. Barnes is going to Demerara or Essequibo, I am not quite certain which. A[lsager] is turned actor. He came out in genteel comedy at Cheltenham this season, and has hopes of a London engagement.

For my own history, I am just in the same spot, doing the same thing (videlicet, little or nothing,) as when you left me; only I have positive hopes that I shall be able to conquer that inveterate habit of smoking which you may remember I indulged in. I think of making a beginning this evening, viz., Sunday 31st August, 1817, not Wednesday, 2nd Feb., 1818, as it will be perhaps when you read this for the first time. There is the difficulty of writing from one end of the globe (hemispheres I call 'em) to another! Why, half the truths I have sent you in this letter will become lies before they reach you, and some of the lies (which I have mixed for variety's sake, and to exercise your judgment in the finding of them out) may be turned into sad realities before you shall be called upon to detect them. Such are the defects of going by different chronologies. Your now is not my now; and again, your then is not my then; but my now may be your then, and *vice versâ*. Whose head is competent to these things?

How does Mrs. Field get on in her geography? Does she know where she is by this time? I am not sure sometimes you are not in another planet; but then I don't like to ask Capt. Burney, or any of those that know anything about it, for fear of exposing my ignorance.

Our kindest remembrances, however, to Mrs. F., if she will accept of reminiscences from another planet, or at least another hemisphere. C. L.

[This is Lamb's first letter that has been preserved to Barron Field. Barron Field (1786–1846) was a lawyer, a son of Henry Field, apothecary to Christ's Hospital, and brother of a fellow-clerk of Lamb's in the India House. He had also been a contributor to Leigh Hunt's *Reflector* in 1810–12. Field was appointed Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales, whither he sailed in 1816, reaching Sydney in February 1817. His wife was a Miss Jane Carncroft.

This letter forms the groundwork of Lamb's *Elia* essay on 'Distant Correspondents,' which may be read with it as an example of the difference in richness between Lamb's epistolary and finished literary style.

I have not seen the original. In Macdonald's edition 'cursed plagiarists' is 'damn'd plagiarists.'

'So thievish 'tis . . .' A perversion of Coleridge's lines, in *The Ancient Mariner*:

So lonely 'twas, that God himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

'Poor Mitchell's death.' This was one of the lies referred to a little lower, for Thomas Mitchell, who had been at Christ's Hospital, was a friend of Leigh Hunt's, and knew Lamb, lived till 1845. He translated Aristophanes.

Thomas Barnes (1785–1841), another old Christ's Hospitaller, and a contributor to the *Reflector*, became editor of *The Times* in 1817. His projected journey was one of the 'lies'; nor did Alsager, another *Times* man, whom we have already met, turn actor.]

300. TO CHARLES CHAMBERS

[Undated: *? 1st September 1817.*]

With regard to a John-dory, which you desire to be particularly informed about, I honour the fish, but it is rather on account of Quin who patronised it, and whose taste (of a *dead* man) I had as lieve go by as anybody's (Apicius and Heliogabalus excepted—this latter started nightingales' tongues and peacocks' brains as a garnish).

Else in *itself*, and trusting to my own poor single judgment, it hath not that moist mellow oleaginous gliding smooth descent from the tongue to the palate, thence to the stomach, &c., that your Brighton Turbot hath, which I take to be the most friendly and familiar flavor of any that swims—most genial and at home to the palate.

Nor has it on the other hand that fine falling off flakiness, that oleaginous peeling off (as it were, like a sea onion), which endears your cod's head & shoulders to some appetites; that manly firmness, combined with a sort of womanish coming-in-pieces, which the same cod's head & shoulders hath, where the whole is easily separable, pliant to a knife or a spoon, but each individual flake presents a pleasing resistance to the opposed tooth. You understand me—these delicate subjects are necessarily obscure.

But it has a third flavor of its own, perfectly distinct from Cod or Turbot, which it must be owned may to some not injudicious palates render it acceptable—but to my unpractised tooth it presented a crude river-fish-flavor, like your Pike or Carp, and perhaps like them should have been tamed & corrected by some laborious & well chosen sauce. Still I always suspect a fish which requires so much of artificial settings-off. Your choicest relishes (like nature's loveliness) need not the foreign aid of

ornament, but are when unadorned (that is, with nothing but a little plain anchovy & a squeeze of lemon) then adorned the most. However, I shall go to Brighton again next Summer, and shall have an opportunity of correcting my judgment, if it is not sufficiently informed. I can only say that when Nature was pleased to make the John Dory so notoriously deficient in outward graces (as to be sure he is the very Rhinoceros of fishes, the ugliest dog that swims, except perhaps the Sea Satyr, which I never saw, but which they say is terrible), when she formed him with so few external advantages, she might have bestowed a more elaborate finish in his parts internal, & have given him a relish, a sapor, to recommend him, as she made Pope a Poet to make up for making him crooked.

I am sorry to find that you have got a knack of saying things which are not true to shew your wit. If I had no wit but what I must shew at the expence of my virtue or my modesty, I had as lieve be as stupid as * * * at the Tea Warehouse. Depend upon it, my dear Chambers, that an ounce of integrity at our death-bed will stand us in more avail than all the wit of Congreve or For instance, you tell me a fine story about Truss, and his playing at Leamington, which I know to be false, because I have advice from Derby that he was whipt through the Town on that very day you say he appeared in some character or other, for robbing an old woman at church of a seal ring. And Dr. Parr has been two months dead. So it won't do to scatter these untrue stories about among people that know any thing. Besides, your forte is not invention. It is *judgment*, particularly shown in your choice of dishes. We seem in that instance born under one star. I like you for liking hare. I esteem you for disrelishing minced veal. Liking is too cold a word.—I love you for your noble attachment to the fat unctuous juices of deer's flesh & the green unspeakable of turtle. I honour you for your endeavours to esteem and approve of my favorite, which I ventured to recommend to you as a substitute for hare, bullock's heart, and I am not offended that you cannot taste it with *my* palate. A true son of Epicurus should reserve one taste peculiar to himself. For a long time I kept the secret about the exceeding deliciousness of the marrow of boiled knuckle of veal, till my tongue weakly ran riot in its praises, and now it is prostitute & common.—But I have

made one discovery which I will not impart till my dying scene is over, perhaps it will be my last mouthful in this world: delicious thought, enough to sweeten (or rather make savoury) the hour of death. It is a little square bit about this size [*see Macdonald's edition for the square*] in or near the knuckle bone of a fried joint of . . . fat I can't call it nor lean neither altogether, it is that beautiful compound, which Nature must have made in Paradise, Park venison, before she separated the two substances, the dry & the oleaginous, to punish sinful mankind; Adam ate them entire & inseparate, and this little taste of Eden in the knuckle bone of a fried . . . seems the only relique of a Paradisaical state. When I die, an exact description of its topography shall be left in a cupboard with a key, inscribed on which these words, 'C. Lamb dying imparts this to C. Chambers as the only worthy depository of such a secret.' You'll drop a tear. . . .

[There are certain slight changes in the text of this letter as given in Macdonald's edition. 'True,' for example, at the beginning of the fifth paragraph, is 'sure.'

Charles Chambers was the brother of John Chambers (see Letter 309). He had been at Christ's Hospital with Lamb and subsequently became a surgeon in the Navy. He retired to Leamington and practised there until his death, somewhere about 1857, said W. C. Hazlitt. He seems to have inherited some of the epicure's tastes of his father, the 'sensible clergyman in Warwickshire' who, Lamb tells us in 'Thoughts on Presents of Game,' 'used to allow a pound of Epping to every hare.'

This letter adds one more to the list of Lamb's gustatory raptures, and it is remarkable as being his only eulogy of fish. Mr. Hazlitt said that the date, 1st September 1817, had been added by another hand; but the Lambs were at Brighton that summer, and the reference to Dr. Parr, who died 6th March 1825, is probably only another joke. Fortunately the date in this particular case is unimportant. Mr. Hazlitt suggested that the stupid person in the Tea Warehouse was Bye, whom we have met.

Of Truss we know nothing. The name may be a misreading of Twiss (Horace Twiss, 1787–1849, politician, buffoon, and Mrs. Siddons's nephew), who was quite a likely person to be lied about jestingly at that time.]

301. TO JAMES AND LOUISA KENNEY

Londres, *October* [*1817*].

DEAR FRIENDS,

It is with infinite regret I inform you that the pleasing privilege of receiving letters, by which I have for these twenty years

gratified my friends and abused the liberality of the Company trading to the Orient, is now at an end. A cruel edict of the Directors has swept it away altogether. The devil sweep away their patronage also. Rascals who think nothing of sponging upon their employers for their Venison and Turtle and Burgundy five days in a week, to the tune of five thousand pounds in a year, now find out that the profits of trade will not allow the innocent communication of thought between their underlings and their friends in distant provinces to proceed untaxed, thus withering up the heart of friendship and making the news of a friend's good health worse than indifferent, as tidings to be deprecated as bringing with it ungracious expenses. Adieu, gentle correspondence, kindly conveyance of soul, interchange of love, of opinions, of puns and what not! Henceforth a friend that does not stand in visible or palpable distance to me, is nothing to me. They have not left to the bosom of friendship even that cheap intercourse of sentiment the twopenny medium. The upshot is, you must not direct any more letters through me. To me you may annually, or biennially, transmit a brief account of your goings on [on] a single sheet, from which after I have deducted as much as the postage comes to, the remainder will be pure pleasure. But no more of those pretty commissions and counter commissions, orders and revoking of orders, obscure messages and obscurer explanations, by which the intellects of Marshall and Fanny used to be kept in a pleasing perplexity, at the moderate rate of six or seven shillings a week. In short, you must use me no longer as a go-between. Henceforth I write up NO THOROUGHFARE.

Well, and how far is Saint Valery from Paris; and do you get wine and walnuts tolerable; and the vintage, does it suffer from the wet? I take it, the wine of this season will be all wine and water; and have you any plays and green rooms, and Fanny Kellies to chat with of an evening; and is the air purer than the old gravel pits, and the bread so much whiter, as they say? Lord, what things you see that travel! I dare say the people are all French wherever you go. What an overwhelming effect that must have! I have stood one of 'em at a time, but two I generally found overpowering, I used to cut and run; but, then, in their own vineyards may be they are endurable enough. They say

marmosets in Senegambia are so pleasant as the day's long, jumping and chattering in the orange twigs; but transport 'em, one by one, over here into England, they turn into monkeys, some with tails, some without, and are obliged to be kept in cages.

I suppose you know we've left the Temple *pro tempore*. By the way, this conduct has caused strange surmises in a good lady of our acquaintance. She lately sent for a young gentleman of the India House, who lives opposite her, at Monroe's, the flute shop in Skinner Street, Snow Hill,—I mention no name, you shall never get out of me what lady I mean,—on purpose to ask all he knew about us. I had previously introduced him to her whist-table. Her inquiries embraced every possible thing that could be known of me, how I stood in the India house, what was the amount of my salary, what it was likely to be hereafter, whether I was thought to be clever in business, why I had taken country lodgings, why at Kingsland in particular, had I friends in that road, was anybody expected to visit me, did I wish for visitors, would an unexpected call be gratifying or not, would it be better if she sent beforehand, did anybody come to see me, wasn't there a gentleman of the name of Morgan, did he know him, didn't he come to see me, did he know how Mr. Morgan lived, she never could make out how they were maintained, was it true that he lived out of the profits of a linendraper's shop in Bishopsgate Street (there she was a little right, and a little wrong—M. is a gentleman tobacconist); in short, she multiplied demands upon him till my friend, who is neither over-modest nor nervous, declared he quite shuddered. After laying as bare to her curiosity as an anatomy he trembled to think what she would ask next. My pursuits, inclinations, aversions, attachments (some, my dear friends, of a most delicate nature), she lugged 'em out of him, or would, had he been privy to them, as you pluck a horse-bean from its iron stem, not as such tender rosebuds should be pulled. The fact is I am come to Kingsland, and that is the real truth of the matter, and nobody but yourselves should have extorted such a confession from me. I suppose you have seen by the Papers that Manning is arrived in England. He expressed some mortifications at not finding Mrs. Kenney in England. He looks a good deal sunburnt, and is got a little reserved, but I hope it will wear off. You will see by the Papers also that Dawe is knighted.

He has been painting the Princess of Coborg and her husband. This is all the news I could think of. Write *to* us, but not *by* us, for I have near ten correspondents of this latter description, and one or other comes pouring in every day, till my purse strings and heart strings crack. Bad habits are not broken at once. I am sure you will excuse the apparent indelicacy of mentioning this, but dear is my shirt, but dearer is my skin, and it's too late when the steed is stole, to shut the door.—Well, and does Louisa grow a fine girl, is she likely to have her mother's complexion, and does Tom polish in French air—Henry I mean—and Kenney is not so fidgety, and YOU sit down sometimes for a quiet half-hour or so, and all is comfortable, no bills (that you call writs) nor anything else (that you are equally sure to miscall) to annoy you? Vive la gaite de cœur et la bell pastime, vive la beau France et revive ma cher Empreur.

C. LAMB.

[James Kenney and his wife were now living at St. Valéry-sur-Somme. Marshall was Godwin's old friend, whom we have already seen, and Fanny was Fanny Holcroft.

Lamb's friend, Fanny Kelly, is first mentioned by Lamb in this letter. Frances Maria Kelly (1790–1882), to give her her full name, was then playing at the Lyceum. We shall soon see much of her.

'We 've left the Temple *pro tempore*.' Referring to the Dalston lodgings.

'What lady I mean.' Mrs. Godwin lived in Skinner Street.

George Dawe was not knighted. Probably it was rumoured that he was to be. His portrait of Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Coburg (who died in 1817 very soon after her marriage) was very popular.

Louisa would be Louisa Holcroft, to whom Lamb was to write some charming nonsense. In Tom Holcroft he also later took some interest.

Lamb probably knew French better than he pretends.]

302. JOINT LETTER BY MARY AND CHARLES LAMB

I. MARY LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

MY DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH, [P.M. *21st November 1817.*]

Your kind letter has given us very great pleasure,—the sight of your hand writing was a most welcome surprize to us. We have heard good tidings of you by all our friends who were so fortunate as to visit you this summer, and rejoice to see it con-

firmed by yourself. You have quite the advantage in volunteering a letter. There is no merit in replying to so welcome a stranger.

We have left the Temple. I think you will be sorry to hear this. I know I have never been so well satisfied with thinking of you at Rydal Mount as when I could connect the idea of you with your own Grasmere Cottage. Our rooms were dirty and out of repair, and the inconveniences of living in chambers became every year more irksome, and so at last we mustered up resolution enough to leave the good old place that so long had sheltered us—and here we are, living at a Brazier's shop, No. 20, in Russell Street, Covent Garden, a place all alive with noise and bustle, Drury Lane Theatre in sight from our front and Covent Garden from our back windows. The hubbub of the carriages returning from the play does not annoy me in the least—strange that it does not, for it is quite tremendous. I quite enjoy looking out of the window and listening to the calling up of the carriages and the squabbles of the coachmen and linkboys. It is the oddest scene to look down upon, I am sure you would be amused with it. It is well I am in a chearful place or I should have many misgivings about leaving the Temple. I look forward with great pleasure to the prospect of seeing my good friend Miss Hutchinson. I wish Rydal Mount with all its inhabitants enclosed were to be transplanted with her and to remain stationary in the midst of Covent Garden. I passed through the street lately where Mr. and Mrs. Wordsworth lodged; several fine new houses, which were then just rising out of the ground, are quite finished and a noble entrance made that way into Portland Place.

I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey—what a blunder the poor man made when he took up his dwelling among the mountains. I long to see my friend Py-pos. Coleridge is still at Little Hampton with Mrs. Gillman, he has been so ill as to be confined to his room almost the whole time he has been there.

Charles has had all his Hogarths bound in a book, they were sent home yesterday, and now that I have them all together and perceive the advantage of peeping close at them through my spectacles I am reconciled to the loss of them hanging round the room, which has been a great mortification to me—in vain I tried to console myself with looking at our new chairs and carpets, for we have got new chairs, and carpets covering all over our two

sitting rooms, I missed my old friends and could not be comforted —then I would resolve to learn to look out of the window, a habit I never could attain in my life, and I have given it up as a thing quite impracticable—yet when I was at Brighton last summer, the first week I never took my eyes off from the sea, not even to look in a book. I had not seen the sea for sixteen years. Mrs. Morgan, who was with us, kept her liking, and continued her seat in the window till the very last, while Charles and I played truant and wandered among the hills, which we magnified into little mountains and *almost as good as* Westmoreland scenery. Certainly we made discoveries of many pleasant walks which few of the Brighton visitors have ever dreamed of—for like as is the case in the neighbourhood of London, after the first two or three miles we were sure to find ourselves in a perfect solitude. I hope we shall meet before the walking faculties of either of us fail. You say you can walk fifteen miles with ease, —that is exactly my stint, and more fatigues me; four or five miles every third or fourth day, keeping very quiet between, was all Mrs. Morgan could accomplish.

God bless you and yours. Love to all and each one.

I am ever yours most affectionately M. LAMB.

II. CHARLES LAMB TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

Here we are, transplanted from our native soil. I thought we never could have been torn up from the Temple. Indeed it was an ugly wrench, but like a tooth, now 'tis out and I am easy. We never can strike root so deep in any other ground. This, where we are, is a light bit of gardener's mold, and if they take us up from it, it will cost no blood and groans like mandrakes pull'd up. We are in the individual spot I like best in all this great city. The theatres with all [*a few words cut away: Talfourd has 'their noises. Covent Garden'*] dearer to me than any gardens of Alcinous, where we are morally sure of the earliest peas and 'sparagus. Bow Street, where the thieves are examined, within a few yards of us. Mary had not been here four and twenty hours before she saw a Thief. She sits at the window working, and casually throwing out her eyes, she sees a concourse of people

coming this way, with a constable to conduct the solemnity. These little incidents agreeably diversify a female life. It is a delicate subject, but is Mr. * * * really married? and has he found a gargle to his mind? O how funny he did talk to me about her, in terms of such mild quiet whispering speculative profligacy. But did the animalcule and she crawl over the rubric together, or did they not? Mary has brought her part of this letter to an orthodox and loving conclusion, which is very well, for I have no room for pansies and remembrances. What a nice holyday I got on Wednesday by favor of a princess dying. [*A line and signature cut away.*]

[The Lambs' house in Russell Street has been rebuilt. Russell Street, Covent Garden, in those days was divided into Great Russell Street (from the Market to Brydges Street, now Catherine Street) and Little Russell Street (from Brydges Street to Drury Lane). The brazier, or ironmonger, was Mr. Owen, Nos. 20 and 21.

The Wordsworths had moved to Rydal Mount in 1813.

'I am very sorry for Mr. De Quincey.' Probably a reference to one of the Opium-eater's illnesses.

It was at Littlehampton that Coleridge met Henry Francis Cary, the translator of Dante, afterwards one of Lamb's friends.

'Spot I like best in all this great city.' See my edition of Lamb's *Works* for a little essay by Lamb on places of residence in London.

'Mr. * * *.' One can but conjecture as to these asterisks. De Quincey, who was very small, married at the close of 1816.

'Pansies.' 'There is pansies, that's for thoughts.' Ophelia in *Hamlet*, IV. v. 176. And Wordsworth had used the flower in the *Ode on Immortality* to express pensive thoughts.

'A princess dying.' Princess Charlotte of Saxe-Coburg. She was buried, amid national lamentation, on 19th November 1817.]

303. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Russell House, *Tuesday 25 Nov. 1817.*

DEAR A.,

We keep *our Thursday* (which is become a moveable feast) this evening, viz. Tuesday. We need not say that your company will be most acceptable. If you can persuade Mrs A. to accompany you, my sister begs me to say we shall consider the obligation double.—Yours truly C. L.

N.B.—Is not the above rather neatly worded?—above my usual cut, I mean. It strikes me so.

304. TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

The Garden of England,
December 10, 1817.

DEAR J. P. C.,

I know how zealously you feel for our friend S. T. Coleridge; and I know that you and your family attended his lectures four or five years ago. He is in bad health and worse mind: and unless something is done to lighten his mind he will soon be reduced to his extremities; and even these are not in the best condition. I am sure that you will do for him what you can; but at present he seems in a mood to do for himself. He projects a new course, not of physic, nor of metaphysic, nor a new course of life, but a new course of lectures on Shakspear and Poetry. There is no man better qualified (always excepting number one); but I am pre-engaged for a series of dissertations on India and India-pendence, to be completed at the expense of the Company, in I know not (yet) how many volumes foolscap folio. I am busy getting up my Hindoo mythology; and for the purpose I am once more enduring Southey's Curse. To be serious, Coleridge's state and affairs make me so; and there are particular reasons just now, and have been any time for the last twenty years, why he should succeed. He will do so with a little encouragement. I have not seen him lately; and he does not know that I am writing.

Yours (for Coleridge's sake) in haste, C. LAMB.

[The 'Garden of England' of the address stands, of course, for Covent Garden.

John Payne Collier (1789–1883), a Shakespearian critic and editor of old plays and poems, was then a reporter on *The Times*. He had recently married. Wordsworth also wrote to Collier on this subject. Coleridge's lectures were delivered in 1818, beginning on 27th January, in Flower-de-Luce Court. Their preservation we owe to Collier's shorthand notes.

'My Hindoo mythology . . . Southey's Curse.' *The Curse of Kehama.*]

305. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

Dec. 10th 1817.

DEAR G.,

I had an interview with Constable, who proposed to me to review 'Mandeville.' I am sorry to say that I must decline it; my time, health and spirits (my *time* particularly) do not admit of

adding to my office business. I once undertook to review the 'Excursion,' and the plague, the intolerable plague and trouble, it cost me would excuse me to you if you could see my inside. I have not had half-an hour to myself (almost literally) since I moved. This must be my resolution; I hope you will have time to get it put into other hands. I could not do you service in 'proportion' of 1 to 1000 of trouble to myself.

I nevertheless subscribe myself

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Godwin's novel, *Mandeville, a Tale of the Seventeenth Century*, was published in 1817. Constable would be Archibald Constable, who published for Sir Walter Scott before Ballantyne, and then again after. He owned the *Edinburgh Review*, where, it is possible, Lamb's article was to appear.]

306. TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

MY DEAR HAYDON, [*26th*] *December 1817.*

I will come with pleasure to 22, Lisson Grove North, at Rossi's, half-way up, right-hand side—if I can find it.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

20, Russell Court, Covent Garden East.
half-way up, next the corner, left hand side.

[Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786–1846) was then principally known by his 'Judgment of Solomon'; he was at this time at work upon his most famous picture, 'Christ's Entry into Jerusalem.' Lamb's note, with the address so meticulously given by way of parodying Haydon's own methods, is in acceptance of the invitation to the famous dinner which Haydon gave on 28th December 1817, to Wordsworth, Keats, Monkhouse, and others, with the Comptroller of Stamps thrown in.

I interpose the host's own description of this amazing and most successful party:

> On 28th December the immortal dinner came off in my painting-room, with Jerusalem towering up behind us as a background. Wordsworth was in fine cue, and we had a glorious set-to,—on Homer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Virgil. Lamb got exceedingly merry and exquisitely witty; and his fun in the midst of Wordsworth's solemn intonations of oratory was like the sarcasm and wit of the fool in the intervals of Lear's passion. He made a speech and voted me absent, and made them drink my health. 'Now,'

said Lamb, 'you old lake poet, you rascally poet, why do you call Voltaire dull?' We all defended Wordsworth, and affirmed there was a state of mind when Voltaire would be dull. 'Well,' said Lamb, 'here 's Voltaire—the Messiah of the French nation, and a very proper one too.'

He then, in a strain of humour beyond description, abused me for putting Newton's head into my picture,—'a fellow,' said he, 'who believed nothing unless it was as clear as the three sides of a triangle.' And then he and Keats agreed he had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colours. It was impossible to resist him, and we all drank 'Newton's health, and confusion to mathematics.' It was delightful to see the good-humour of Wordsworth in giving in to all our frolics without affectation and laughing as heartily as the best of us.

By this time other friends joined, amongst them poor Ritchie who was going to penetrate by Fezzan to Timbuctoo. I introduced him to all as 'a gentleman going to Africa.' Lamb seemed to take no notice; but all of a sudden he roared out, 'Which is the gentleman we are going to lose?' We then drank the victim's health, in which Ritchie joined.

In the morning of this delightful day, a gentleman, a perfect stranger, had called on me. He said he knew my friends, had an enthusiasm for Wordsworth, and begged I would procure him the happiness of an introduction. He told me he was a comptroller of stamps, and often had correspondence with the poet. I thought it a liberty; but still, as he seemed a gentleman, I told him he might come.

When we retired to tea we found the comptroller. In introducing him to Wordsworth I forgot to say who he was. After a little time the comptroller looked down, looked up and said to Wordsworth, 'Don't you think, sir, Milton was a great genius?' Keats looked at me, Wordsworth looked at the comptroller. Lamb who was dozing by the fire turned round and said, 'Pray, sir, did you say Milton was a great genius?' 'No, sir; I asked Mr. Wordsworth if he were not.' 'Oh,' said Lamb, 'then you are a silly fellow.' 'Charles! my dear Charles!' said Wordsworth; but Lamb, perfectly innocent of the confusion he had created, was off again by the fire.

After an awful pause the comptroller said, 'Don't you think Newton a great genius?' I could not stand it any longer. Keats put his head into my books. Ritchie squeezed in a laugh. Wordsworth seemed asking himself, 'Who is this?' Lamb got up, and taking a candle, said, 'Sir, will you allow me to look at your phrenological development?' He then turned his back on the poor man, and at every question of the comptroller he chaunted:

Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John
Went to bed with his breeches on.

The man in office, finding Wordsworth did not know who he was, said in a spasmodic and half-chuckling anticipation of assured victory, 'I have had the honour of some correspondence with you, Mr. Wordsworth.' 'With me, sir?' said Wordsworth, 'not that I remember.' 'Don't you, sir? I am a comptroller of stamps.' There was a dead silence;—the comptroller

evidently thinking that was enough. While we were waiting for Wordsworth's reply, Lamb sung out

Hey diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle.

'My dear Charles!' said Wordsworth,—

Diddle diddle dumpling, my son John,

chaunted Lamb, and then rising, exclaimed, 'Do let me have another look at that gentleman's organs.' Keats and I hurried Lamb into the painting-room, shut the door and gave way to inextinguishable laughter. Monkhouse followed and tried to get Lamb away. We went back, but the comptroller was irreconcilable. We soothed and smiled and asked him to supper. He stayed though his dignity was sorely affected. However, being a good-natured man, we parted all in good-humour, and no ill effects followed.

All the while, until Monkhouse succeeded, we could hear Lamb struggling in the painting-room and calling at intervals: 'Who is that fellow? Allow me to see his organs once more.'

It was indeed an immortal evening. Wordsworth's fine intonation as he quoted Milton and Virgil, Keats's eager inspired look, Lamb's quaint sparkle of lambent humour, so speeded the stream of conversation, that in my life I never passed a more delightful time. All our fun was within bounds. Not a word passed that an apostle might not have listened to. It was a night worthy of the Elizabethan age, and my solemn Jerusalem flashing up by the flame of the fire, with Christ hanging over us like a vision, all made up a picture which will long glow upon—

that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude.

Keats made Ritchie promise he would carry his Endymion to the great desert of Sahara and fling it in the midst.

Poor Ritchie went to Africa, and died, as Lamb foresaw, in 1819. Keats died in 1821, at Rome. C. Lamb is gone, joking to the last. Monkhouse is dead, and Wordsworth and I are the only two now living (1841) of that glorious party.]

307. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: ? Early *1818*.]

DR C.,

Your sonnet is capital. The Paper ingenious, only that it split into 4 parts (besides a side splinter) in the carriage. I have transferred it to the common English Paper, *manufactured of rags*, for better preservation. I never knew before how the Iliad and Odyssey were written. Tis strikingly corroborated by observations on Cats. These domestic animals, put 'em on a

rug before the fire, wink their eyes up and listen to the Kettle, and then PURR, which is their Poetry.

On Sunday week we kiss your hands (if they are clean). This next Sunday I have been engaged for some time.

With remembces to your good Host and Hostess

Yours ever C. LAMB.

[The sonnet was Coleridge's *Fancy in Nubibus; or, The Poet in the Clouds*, printed first in *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, edited and owned by J. M. Gutch, and appears in *Blackwood*, but now sent to Lamb in manuscript, written on sea-weed, or on some preparation from it. Discovered by Major Butterworth, who published an article with illustrations in the *Bookman* in July 1920. The original was afterwards sold in New York.

This is the sonnet:

O! it is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
To make the shifting clouds be what you please,
Or let the easily persuaded eyes
Own each quaint likeness issuing from the mould
Of a friend's fancy; or with head bent low
And cheek aslant see rivers flow of gold
'Twixt crimson banks; and then, a traveller, go
From mount to mount through Cloudland, gorgeous land!
Or, list'ning to the tide, with closéd sight,
Be that blind bard, who on the Chian strand
By those deep sounds possessed with inward light,
Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea.

308. TO MRS. WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

18 feb. 1818. East India House.

(Mary shall send you all the *news*, which I find I have left out.)

MY DEAR MRS. WORDSWORTH,

I have repeatedly taken pen in hand to answer your kind letter. My sister should more properly have done it, but she having failed, I consider myself answerable for her debts. I am now trying to do it in the midst of Commercial noises, and with a quill which seems more ready to glide into arithmetical figures and names of Goods, Cassia, Cardemoms, Aloes, Ginger, Tea, than into kindly responses and friendly recollections.

The reason why I cannot write letters at home is, that I am never alone. Plato's (I write to *W. W.* now) Plato's double

animal parted never longed [? more] to be reciprocally reunited in the system of its first creation, than I sometimes do to be but for a moment single and separate. Except my morning's walk to the office, which is like treading on sands of gold for that reason, I am never so. I cannot walk home from office but some officious friend offers his damn'd unwelcome courtesies to accompany me. All the morning I am pestered. I could sit and gravely cast up sums in great Books, or compare sum with sum, and write PAID against this and UNP'D against t'other, and yet reserve in some 'corner of my mind' some darling thoughts all my own—faint memory of some passage in a Book—or the tone of an absent friend's Voice—a snatch of Miss Burrell's singing—a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face—The two operations might be going on at the same time without thwarting, as the sun's two motions (earth's I mean), or as I sometimes turn round till I am giddy, in my back parlour, while my sister is walking longitudinally in the front—or as the shoulder of veal twists round with the spit, while the smoke wreathes up the chimney —but there are a set of amateurs of the Belle Lettres—the gay science—who come to me as a sort of rendezvous, putting questions of criticism, of British Institutions, Lalla Rooks &c., what Coleridge said at the Lecture last night—who have the form of reading men, but, for any possible use Reading can be to them but to talk of, might as well have been Ante-Cadmeans born, or have lain sucking out the sense of an Egypt[n]. hieroglyph as long as the Pyramids will last before they should find it. These pests worrit me at business and in all its intervals, perplexing my accounts, poisoning my little salutary warming-time at the fire, puzzling my paragraphs if I take a newspaper, cramming in between my own free thoughts and a column of figures which had come to an amicable compromise but for them. Their noise ended, one of them, as I said, accompanys me home lest I should be solitary for a moment; he at length takes his welcome leave at the door, up I go, mutton on table, hungry as hunter, hope to forget my cares and bury them in the agreeable abstraction of mastication, knock at the door, in comes Mrs. Hazlitt, or M. Burney, or Morgan, or Demogorgon, or my brother, or somebody, to prevent my eating alone, a Process absolutely necessary to my poor wretched digestion. O the pleasure of eating alone!—

eating my dinner alone! let me think of it. But in they come, and make it absolutely necessary that I should open a bottle of orange —for my meat turns into stone when any one dines with me, if I have not wine—wine can mollify stones. Then *that* wine turns into acidity, acerbity, misanthropy, a hatred of my interrupters (God bless 'em! I love some of 'em dearly), and with the hatred a still greater aversion to their going away. Bad is the dead sea they bring upon me, choaking and death-doing, but worse is the deader dry sand they leave me on if they go before bed time. Come never, I would say to these spoilers of my dinner, but if you come, never go. The fact is, this interruption does not happen very often, but every time it comes by surprise that present bane of my life, orange wine, with all its dreary stifling consequences, follows. Evening Company I should always like had I any mornings, but I am saturated with human faces (*divine* forsooth) and voices all the golden morning, and five evenings in a week would be as much as I should covet to be in company, but I assure you that is a wonderful week in which I can get two, or one, to myself. I am never C. L. but always C. L. and Co.

He, who thought it not good for man to be alone, preserve me from the more prodigious monstrosity of being never by myself. I forget bed time, but even there these sociable frogs clamber up to annoy me. Once a week, generally some singular evening that, being alone, I go to bed at the hour I ought always to be abed, just close to my bedroom window, is the club room of a public house, where a set of singers, I take them to be chorus-singers of the two theatres (it must be *both of them*), begin their orgies. They are a set of fellows (as I conceive) who being limited by their talents to the burthen of the song at the play houses, in revenge have got the common popular airs by Bishop or some cheap composer arranged for choruses, that is, to be sung all in chorus. At least I never can catch any of the text of the plain song, nothing but the Babylonish choral howl at the tail on't. 'That fury being quenchd'—the howl I mean—a curseder burden succeeds, of shouts and clapping and knocking of the table. At length over tasked nature drops under it and escapes for a few hours into the society of the sweet silent creatures of Dreams, which go away with mocks and mows at cockcrow. And then I

think of the words Christobel's father used (bless me, I have dipt in the wrong ink) to say every morning by way of variety when he awoke—'Every knell, the Baron saith, Wakes us up to a world of death,' or something like it. All I mean by this senseless interrupted tale is that by my central situation I am a little over companied. Not that I have any animosity against the good creatures that are so anxious to drive away the Harpy solitude from me. I like 'em, and cards, and a chearful glass, but I mean merely to give you an idea between office confinement and after office society, how little time I can call my own. I mean only to draw a picture, not to make an inference. I would not that I know of have it otherwise. I only wish sometimes I could exchange some of my faces and voices for the faces and voices which a late visitation brought most welcome and carried away leaving regret, but more pleasure, even a kind of gratitude at being so often favored with that kind northern visitation. My London faces and noises don't hear me—I mean no disrespect—or I should explain myself that instead of their return 220 times a year and the return of W. W. &c. 7 times in 104 weeks, some more equal distribution might be found. I have scarce room to put in Mary's kind love and my poor name.

CH. LAMB.

This to be read last.

W. H. goes on lecturing against W. W. and making copious use of quotations from said W. W. to give a zest to said lectures. S. T. C. is lecturing with success. I have not heard either him or H. but I dined with S. T. C. at Gilman's a Sunday or two since and he was well and in good spirits. I mean to hear some of the course, but lectures are not much to my taste, whatever the lecturer may be. If *read*, they are dismal flat, and you can't think why you are brought together to hear a man read his works which you could read so much better at leisure yourself; if delivered extəmpore, I am always in pain lest the gift of utterance should suddenly fail the orator in the middle, as it did me at the dinner given in honour of me at the London Tavern. 'Gentlemen,' said I, and there I stoppt,—the rest my feelings were under the necessity of supplying. Mrs. Wordsworth *will* go on, kindly haunting us with visions of seeing the lakes once more

which never can be realized. Between us there is a great gulf—not of inexplicable moral antipathies and distances, I hope (as there seemd to be between me and that Gentleman concern'd in the Stamp office that I so strangely coiled up from at Haydons). I think I had an instinct that he was the head of an office. I hate all such people—Accountants, Deputy Accountants. The dear abstract notion of the East India Company, as long as she is unseen, is pretty, rather Poetical; but as SHE makes herself manifest by the persons of such Beasts, I loathe and detest her as the Scarlet what-do-you-call-her of Babylon. I thought, after abridging us of all our red letter days, they had done their worst, but I was deceived in the length to which Heads of offices, those true Liberty haters, can go. They are the tyrants, not Ferdinand, nor Nero—by a decree past this week, they have abridged us of the immemorially-observed custom of going at one o'clock of a Saturday, the little shadow of a holiday left us. Blast them. I speak it soberly. Dear W. W., be thankful for your Liberty.

We have spent two very pleasant Evenings lately with Mr. Monkhouse.

[Mary Lamb's letter of news either was not written or has not been preserved.

Lamb returned to the subject of this essay for his Popular Fallacy, 'That Home is Home' in 1826. Previously to that essay he had written an article in the *New Times* on unwelcome callers (see my edition of the *Works*).

'Plato's double animal.' In the *Symposium*.

'Miss Burrell.' Fanny Burrell, afterwards Mrs. Gould. Lamb wrote in praise of her performance in *Don Giovanni in London*. See my edition again.

'What Coleridge said.' Coleridge was still lecturing on Shakespeare and poetry in Flower-de-Luce Court.

'Ante-Cadmeans.' Cadmus is fabled as having introduced the use of letters into Greece.

'The two theatres.' Drury Lane and Covent Garden.

'Bishop.' Sir Henry Rowley Bishop (1786–1855), composer of *Home, Sweet Home*.

'Christobel's father.'

> Each matin bell, the Baron saith,
> Knells us back to a world of death.
>
> *Christabel*, Part II, lines 1 and 2.

'W. H. goes on lecturing.' Hazlitt was delivering a course of lectures on the English poets at the Surrey Institution.

'"Gentlemen" said I.' The dinner was given him by The Amicable Society of Blues, 11th February 1817. On another occasion Lamb, asked to give a

toast, gave the best he knew—woodcock on toast. Recall also his toasts at Haydon's dinner.

'Gentleman concern'd in the Stamp office.' See note to the letter to Haydon.

'Our red letter days.' Lamb repeats the complaint in his *Elia* essay, 'Oxford in the Vacation.' In 1820, I see from the directory, the accountant's office, where Lamb had his desk, kept sacred only five red-letter days, where, ten years earlier, it had observed many.

'Mr. Monkhouse.' Thomas Monkhouse, a friend of the Wordsworths and of Lamb. He was at Haydon's dinner.]

309. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER

[*28th May 1818.*]

DEAR SIR,

The last sheet is finish'd. All that remains is the Title page and the Contents, which should be uniform with vol. 1. Will you be kind enough to see to it? There is a Sonnet to come in by way of dedication. I have not the sheet, so I cannot make out the Table of Contents, but it may be done from the various Essays, Letters, &c. by you, or the Printer, as thus. [*Here follows a rough sketch of the writer's plan.*]

Yours in Haste. C. LAMB.

Let me see the last proof, sonnet, &c.

Messrs. Ollier, Booksellers,
Vere Street, Oxford Street.

[The letter begins in the singular number, so that either of the brothers Ollier—Charles or James—might open it. The Olliers figure in the correspondence during some years.

This letter refers to *The Works of Charles Lamb*, in two volumes, published by C. and J. Ollier in 1818.

The missing sonnet, forming the dedication of vol. ii, the Prose, was to Martin Charles Burney. Vol. i, the Poetry, was dedicated to Coleridge. (See my edition of Lamb's complete *Works*.) Lamb had the book in mind as early as 1816, and John Murray was approached, but did not care for it.

Inserted in a copy of the *Works*, presented to Miss Kelly, is this brief note:]

Mr. Lamb having taken the liberty of addressing a slight compliment to Miss Kelly in his first volume, respectfully requests her acceptance of the Collection.

7th June 1818.

[The compliment was the sonnet *To Miss Kelly*, beginning:

You are not, Kelly, of the common strain.]

310. TO JOHN CHAMBERS

DEAR C., [No date: *? 1818.*]

I steal a few minutes from a painful and laborious avocation, aggravated by the absence of some that should assist me, to say how extremely happy we should be to see you return clean as the cripple out of the pool of Bethesda. That damn'd scorbutic—how came you by it? . . . You are now fairly a damaged lot; as Venn would say, One Scratched. You might play Scrub in the *Beaux' Stratagem*. The best post your friends could promote you to would be a scrubbing post. 'Aye, there's the rub.' I generally get tired after the third rubber. But you, I suppose, tire twice the number every day. First, there's your mother, she begins after breakfast; then your little sister takes it up about Nuncheon time, till her bones crack, and some kind neighbour comes in to lend a hand, scrub, scrub, scrub, and nothing will get the intolerable itch (for I am persuaded it is the itch) out of your penance-doing bones. A cursed thing just at this time, when everybody wants to get out of town as well as yourself. Of course, I don't mean to reproach you. You can't help it, the whoreson tingling in your blood. I dare say you would if you could. But don't you think you could do a little work, if you came? as much as D[odwell] does before 12 o'Clock. Hang him, there he sits at that cursed *Times*—and latterly he has had the *Berkshire Chronicle* sent him every Tuesday and Friday to get at the County news. Why, that letter which you favored him with, appears to me to be very well and clearly written. The man that wrote that might make out warrants, or write Committees. There was as much in quantity written as would have filled four volumes of the Indigo appendix; and when we are so busy as we are, every little helps. But I throw out these observations merely as innuendos. By the way there's a Doctor Lamert in Leadenhall Street, who sells a mixture to purify the blood. No. 114 Leadenhall Street, near the market. But it is necessary that his Patients should be on the spot, that he may see them every day. There's a sale of Indigo advertised for July, forty thousand lots—10,000 chests only, but they sell them in quarter chests which makes 40,000. By the bye a droll accident happened here on

Thursday, Wadd and Plumley got quarrelling about a kneebuckle of Hyde's which the latter affirmed not to be standard; Wadd was nettled at this, and said something reflecting on tradesmen and shopkeepers, and Plumley struck him. . . . Friend is married; he has married a Roman Catholic, which has offended his family, but they have come to an agreement, that the boys (if they have children) shall be bred up in the father's religion, and the girls in the mother's, which I think equitable enough. . . . I am determined my children shall be brought up in their father's religion, if they can find out what it is. Bye is about publishing a volume of poems which he means to dedicate to Matthie. Methinks he might have found a better Mecænas. They are chiefly amatory, others of them stupid, the greater part very far below mediocrity; but they discover much tender feeling; they are most like Petrarch of any foreign Poet, or what we might have supposed Petrarch would have written if Petrarch had been born a fool! Grinwallows is made master of the ceremonies at Dandelion, near Margate; of course he gives up the office. 'My Harry' makes so many faces that it is impossible to sit opposite him without smiling. Dowley danced a Quadrille at Court on the Queen's birthday with Lady Thynne, Lady Desbrow, and Lady Louisa Manners. It is said this performance was graceful and airy. Cabel has taken an unaccountable fancy into his head that he is Fuller, member for Sussex. He imitates his blunt way of speaking. I remain much the same as you remember, very universally beloved and esteemed, possessing everybody's good-will, and trying at least to deserve it; the same steady adherence to principle, and correct regard for truth, which always marked my conduct, marks it still. If I am singular in anything it is in too great a squeamishness to anything that remotely looks like a falsehood. I am call'd Old Honesty; sometimes Upright Telltruth, Esq., and I own it tickles my vanity a little. The Committee have formally abolish'd all holydays whatsoever—for which may the Devil, who keeps no holydays, have them in his eternal burning workshop. When I say holydays, I mean Calendar holydays, for at Medley's instigation they have agreed to a sort of scale by which the Chief has power to give leave of absence, viz.:—

Those who have been 50 years and upwards to be absent 4 days in the year, but not without leave of the Chief.

35 years and upward, 3 days,
25 years and upward, 2 days,
18 years and upward, 1 day,

which I think very Liberal. We are also to sign our name when we *go* as well as when we *come*, and every quarter of an hour we sign, to show that we are here. Mins and Gardner take it in turn to bring round the book—O here *is* Mins with the Book—no, it's Gardner—'What's that, G.?' 'The appearance book, Sir' (with a gentle inclination of his head, and smiling). 'What the devil is the quarter come again?' It annoys Dodwell amazingly; he sometimes has to sign six or seven times while he is reading the Newspaper—

[*Unfinished.*]

[John Chambers, the brother of Charles Chambers, was a colleague of Lamb's at the India House, and survived until 1872. It was to John Chambers that Lamb made the remark that he (Lamb) was probably the only man in England who had never worn boots and never ridden a horse. All the names in this letter are those of India House clerks. Matthie was Lt.-Col. James Matthie, who was associated with the office.

'Whoreson tingling.' 2 *Henry IV*, I. ii. 129.

'Dandelion.' The ancient seat of the Dawndelyens family at Margate. At that time a tea-garden. It is now a farm.

John Fuller, M.P., was 'honest Jack Fuller,' of Rose Hill in Sussex, famous in the House for his bluntness.]

311. TO CHARLES AND JAMES OLLIER

[P.M. *18th June 1818.*]

DEAR SIR (whichever opens it)

I am going off to Birmingh^m^. I find my books, whatever faculty of selling they may have (I wish they had more for {*your* / *my*} sake), are admirably adapted for giving away. You have been bounteous. Six more and I shall have satisfied all just claims. Am I taking too great a liberty in begging you to send 4 as follows, and reserve 2 for me when I come home? That will make 31. Thirty-one times 12 is 372 shillings, Eighteen pounds twelve Shillings!!!—but here are my friends, to whom,

if you *could* transmit them, as I shall be away a month, you will greatly

oblige the obliged

C. LAMB.

Mr. Ayrton, James Street, Buckingham Gate
Mr. Alsager, Suffolk Street East, Southwark, by Horsemonger Lane and in one parcel
directed to R. Southey, Esq., Keswick, Cumberland,
one for R. S.;
and one for Wm. Wordsworth, Esqr.

If you will be kind enough simply to write 'from the Author' in all 4—you will still further etc.—

Either Longman or Murray is in the frequent habit of sending books to Southey and will take charge of the Parcel. It will be as well to write in at the beginning thus

R. Southey Esq. from the Author.
W. Wordsworth Esq. from the Author.

Then, if I can find the remaining 2, left for me at Russell St when I return, rather than encroach any more on the heap, I will engage to make no more new friends ad infinitum, YOURSELVES being the last.

Yours truly C. L.

I think Southey will give us a lift in that damn'd Quarterly. I meditate an attack upon that Cobler Gifford, which shall appear immediately after any favourable mention which S. may make in the Quarterly. It can't in decent *gratitude* appear *before.*

[Lamb was probably visiting the Chambers family at Birmingham; not the Lloyds any more.

The attack on Gifford was probably the following sonnet, printed in the *Examiner* for 3rd and 4th October 1819:

ST. CRISPIN TO MR. GIFFORD

All unadvised, and in an evil hour,
Lured by aspiring thoughts, my son, you daft
The lowly labours of the Gentle Craft
For learned toils, which blood and spirits sour.
All things, dear pledge, are not in all men's power;

The wiser sort of shrub affects the ground;
And sweet content of mind is oftener found
In cobbler's parlour, than in critic's bower.
The sorest work is what doth cross the grain;
And better to this hour you had been plying
The obsequious awl with well-waxed finger flying,
Than ceaseless thus to till a thankless vein;
Still teazing Muses, which are still denying;
Making a stretching-leather of your brain.]

312. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

DEAR SOUTHEY, *Monday, Oct. 26th, 1818.*

I am pleased with your friendly remembrances of my little things. I do not know whether I have done a silly thing or a wise one; but it is of no great consequence. I run no risk, and care for no censures. My bread and cheese is stable as the foundations of Leadenhall Street, and if it hold out as long as the 'foundations of our empire in the East,' I shall do pretty well. You and W. W. should have had your presentation copies more ceremoniously sent; but I had no copies when I was leaving town for my holidays, and rather than delay, commissioned my bookseller to send them thus nakedly. By not hearing from W. W. or you, I began to be afraid Murray had not sent them. I do not see S. T. C. so often as I could wish. He never comes to me; and though his host and hostess are very friendly, it puts me out of my way to go see one person at another person's house. It was the same when he resided at Morgan's. Not but they also were more than civil; but after all one feels so welcome at one's own house. Have you seen poor Miss Betham's 'Vignettes'? Some of them, the second particularly, 'To Lucy,' are sweet and good as herself, while she was herself. She is in some measure abroad again. I am *better than I deserve* to be. The hot weather has been such a treat! Mary joins in this little corner in kindest remembrances to you all.

C. L.

[Matilda Betham followed up *The Lay of Marie* with a volume entitled *Vignettes*.

'I am *better than I deserve*.' Lamb underlined these words, probably as a hint that he was not being very wise with his health; but they may have been a

quotation from Coleridge. Carlyle in an account of a visit to Coleridge at Highgate (in the *Life of John Sterling*, Chapter VIII) puts it into Coleridge's mouth concerning a cup of tea. '"Ah, your tea is too cold, Mr. Coleridge," mourned the good Mrs. Gilman. Although cold, it was better, he said, than he deserved. That was later, but it may have been a saying of which Coleridge was fond.]

313. TO FANNY KELLY

October 31, 1818.

['I hoap you will lave your orders with the hall keepper this evven for to have your Bons for tomor night as you promise me this day.

'John hanley

'watchman from Drury

'Lane theatre.']

The above honest man once took a box for me and kept me in it all night.

CH. LAMB

Laureat to Miss Kelly.

[The first letter to Miss Kelly.

'Bons,' i.e. bones, free passes to the theatre. See again, p. 253.

Here may come a scrap which obviously accompanied a real letter:]

314. TO FANNY KELLY

I am the worst folder up of a letter in the world, tho' I hear there is a peasant in Moldavia who does not know how to fold one up at all.

C. L.

315. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Dec. 24th, 1818.

MY DEAR COLERIDGE,

I have been in a state of incessant hurry ever since the receipt of your ticket. It found me incapable of attending you, it being the night of Kenney's new comedy which has utterly failed. You know my local aptitudes at such a time; I have been a thorough rendezvous for all consultations. My head begins to clear up a little; but it has had bells in it. Thank you kindly for your ticket, though the mournful prognostic which accompanies it certainly renders its permanent pretensions less marketable; but I trust to hear many a course yet. You excepted

Christmas week, by which I understood *next week*; I thought Christmas week was that which Christmas Sunday ushered in. We are sorry it never lies in your way to come to us; but, dear Mahomet, we will come to you. Will it be convenient to all the good people at Highgate, if we take a stage up, *not next Sunday*, but the following, viz., 3rd January, 1819—shall we be too late to catch a skirt of the old out-goer;—how the years crumble from under us! We shall hope to see you before then; but, if not, let us know if *then* will be convenient. Can we secure a coach home?

Believe me ever yours, C. LAMB.

I have but one holiday, which is Christmas-day itself nakedly: no pretty garnish and fringes of St. John's day, Holy Innocents &c., that used to bestud it all around in the calendar. *Improbe labor!* I write six hours every day in this candle-light fog-den at Leadenhall.

[The ticket was for a new course of lectures, either on the History of Philosophy, or Six Plays of Shakespeare, both of which began in December 1818, and continued into 1819.

Kenney's new farce was *A Word for the Ladies*, produced at Covent Garden on 17th December. In a letter to Leigh Hunt on 19th August 1823, Mary Shelley writes: 'K[enney] says that when he met you it was at Lamb's after a damnation of his case—when all his wish was that people *would not be sympathizing*, and that you seemed to understand this feeling so well and ate your supper with much appetite, and forced the conversation into the most opposite channels that he was quite delighted. "Yes," said Mrs. K., "I loved Mr. Hunt from that moment."'

'To catch a skirt of the old out-goer.' A reference to Coleridge's line in the *Ode on the Departing Year*:

I saw the skirts of the departing year.

'Skirts' was later altered to 'train.'

'*Improbe labor!*': O unrelenting toil. (Adapted from Virgil, *Georgics*, *i.* 145–6:

Labor omnia vincit
Improbus.

316. TO JOHN MATHEW GUTCH

DEAR GUTCH, *January 1819.*

I was thinking yesterday of our old play-going days, of your and my partiality to Mrs. Jordan; of our disputes as to the relative

merits of Dodd and Parsons; and whether Smith or Jack Palmer, were the most of a Gentleman. The occasion of my falling into this train of thinking was my learning from the newspapers that Miss Kelly is paying the Bath Theatre a visit. (Your own Theatre, I am sorry to find, is shut up, either from parsimonious feeling, or through the influence of . . . principles.[1]) This lady has long ranked among the most considerable of our London performers. If there are one or two of greater name, I must impute it to the circumstance that she has never burst upon the town at once in the maturity of her powers; which is a great advantage to débutantes, who have passed their probationary years in Provincial Theatres. We do not hear them tuning their instruments. But she has been winning her patient way from the humblest gradations to the eminence which she has now attained, on the self same boards which supported her first in the slender pretensions of chorus-singer. I very much wish that you would go and see her. You will not see Mrs. Jordan, but something else; something on the whole very little, if at all, inferior to that lady, in her best days. I cannot hope that you will think so; I do not even wish that you should. Our longest remembrances are the most sacred; and I shall revere the prejudice, that shall prevent you from thinking quite so favorably of her as I do.—I do not well know how to draw a parallel between their distinct manners of acting. I seem to recognize the same pleasantness and nature in both: but Mrs. Jordan's was the carelessness of a child; her child-like spirit shook off the load of years from her spectators; she seemed one whom care could not come near; a privileged being, sent to teach mankind what it most wants, joyousness. Hence, if we had more unmixed pleasure from her performances, we had, perhaps, less sympathy with them than with those of her successor. This latter lady's is the joy of a freed spirit, escaping from care, as a bird that had been limed; her smiles, if I may use the expression, seemed saved out of the fire, relics which a good and innocent heart had snatched up as most portable; her contents are visitors, not inmates: she can lay them by altogether; and when she does so, I am not sure that she is not greatest. She is, in truth, no

[1] 'The word here omitted by the Bristol editor, we suppose, is *methodistical*' —(Leigh Hunt in the *Examiner*.)

ordinary tragedian. Her Yarico is the most intense piece of acting which I ever witnessed, the most heart-rending spectacle. To see her leaning upon that wretched reed, her lover—the very exhibition of whose character would be a moral offence, but for her clinging and noble credulity—to see her lean upon that flint, and by the strong workings of passion imagine it a god—is one of the most afflicting lessons of the yearnings of the human heart and its sad mistakes, that ever was read upon a stage. The whole performance is every where *African*, fervid, glowing. Nor is this any thing more than the wonderful force of imagination in this performer; for turn but the scene, and you shall have her come forward in some kindly home-drawn character of an English rustic, a Phoebe, or a Dinah Cropley, where you would swear that her thoughts had never strayed beyond the precincts of the dairy, or the farm; or her mind known less tranquil passions than she might have learned among the flock, her out-of-door companions. See her again in parts of pure fun, such as the Housemaid in the Merry Mourners, where the suspension of the broom in her hand, which she had been delightfully twirling, on unexpectedly encountering her sweetheart in the character of a fellow-servant, is quite equal to Mrs. Jordan's cordial inebriation in Nell.—I do not know whether I am not speaking it to her honor, that she does not succeed in what are called fine lady parts. Our friend C. once observed, that no man of genius ever figured as a gentleman. Neither did any woman, gifted with Mrs. Jordan's or Miss Kelly's sensibilities, ever take upon herself to shine as a fine lady, the very essence of this character consisting in the entire repression of all genius and all feeling. To sustain a part of this kind to the life, a performer must be haunted by a perpetual self-reference: she must be always thinking of herself, and how she looks, and how she deports herself in the eyes of the spectators; whereas the delight of actresses of true feeling, and their chief power, is to elude the personal notice of an audience, to escape into their parts, and hide themselves under the hood of their assumed character. Their most graceful self-possession is in fact a self-forgetfulness; an oblivion alike of self and of spectators. For this reason your most approved epilogue-speakers have been always ladies who have possessed least of this self-forgetting quality; and I think I have seen the amiable actress

in question suffering some embarrassment when she has had an address of this sort to deliver; when she found the modest veil of personation, which had half hid her from the audience, suddenly withdrawn, and herself brought without any such qualifying intervention before the public.

I should apologise for the length of this letter, if I did not remember the lively interest you used to take in theatrical performances.—

I am, &c. &c.,

[I include this letter among the correspondence, because there is no positive proof that Lamb intended Gutch to print it in his paper, *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, where it appeared on 30th January 1819, and also because it paves the way to the remarkable letters to Miss Kelly to which we shall shortly come.

I have set the letter here from the Bristol paper, but it has usually been taken from the *Examiner*, into which Hunt copied it in the numbers for 7th and 8th July 1819, with the comment: 'We should have guessed the masterly and cordial hand that wrote them had we met with it in the East Indies.'

More will be said of Miss Kelly later, but here I would mention that Lamb, whose devotion was about to ripen into something warmer, had begun his admiration some time earlier. We have seen him, in a letter to Mrs. Wordsworth a year before, referring to 'a gleam of Fanny Kelly's divine plain face' while there was a sonnet in his *Works*, 1818, in praise of her genius.

John Mathew Gutch, who lent Lamb the edition of Wither, became proprietor of *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* in 1803. Miss Kelly was at Bath in 1819 at the end of January and first half of February.

'Our old play-going days.' The Lambs lodged with Gutch, who was then a law stationer, at 34 Southampton Buildings, in 1800. Lamb was there alone for some time, during his sister's illness, and it is probably to this period that he refers.

'Mrs. Jordan.' Dorothea Jordan (1762–1816) was the greatest comedienne of her time; she left the London stage in 1814. Miss Kelly played many of her parts.

'Dodd and Parsons.' James William Dodd (?1740–96), famous for his Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night*, which Lamb extols in 'The Old Actors.' William Parsons (1736–95), the comedian. Foresight in Congreve's *Love for Love* was one of his best parts.

'Smith or Jack Palmer.' William Smith (?1730–1819), known as Gentleman Smith. Lamb perhaps saw him on the night of 18th May 1798, his sole appearance for ten years; otherwise his knowledge of his acting could be but small. On that occasion Smith played Charles Surface in *The School for Scandal*, Joseph Surface being Jack Palmer's great part (see the *Elia* essay on 'The Artificial Comedy,' for an analysis of Palmer's acting).

'Miss Kelly.' Frances Maria Kelly (1790–1882) made her début at the age of seven in *Bluebeard* (the music by her uncle, Michael Kelly), at Drury Lane,

in 1798. She was enrolled as a chorister of Drury Lane in 1799. She made her farewell appearance at Drury Lane in 1835.

'Yarico.' In *Inkle and Yarico*, 1787, by George Colman the younger (1762–1836).

'A Phoebe or a Dinah Cropley.' Phoebe, in *Rosina*, by Mrs. Frances Brooke (1724–89). I do not find a Dinah Cropley among Miss Kelly's parts. She played Dinah Primrose in O'Keeffe's *Young Quaker*—Lamb may have been thinking of that.

'The Merry Mourners.' *Modern Antiques; or, The Merry Mourners*, 1791, by John O'Keeffe. It was while playing in this farce on 17th February 1816 that Miss Kelly was fired at by a lunatic in the pit. Some of the shot is said to have fallen into the lap of Mary Lamb, who was present with her brother.

'Inebriation in Nell.' Nell, in *The Devil to Pay*, 1731, originally by Charles Coffey (*d.* 1745), but much adapted. Nell was one of Mrs. Jordan's great parts.

'Our friend C.' Coleridge, who was also at Christ's Hospital with Gutch. He says, in *Biographia Literaria*: 'Men of letters and literary genius are too often what is styled in trivial irony "fine gentlemen spoilt in the making." They care not for show and grandeur in what surrounds them, having enough within . . . but they are fine gentlemen in all that concerns ease and pleasurable, or at least comfortable, sensation.' In one of his lectures on 'Poetry, the Drama, and Shakespeare,' in 1818, Coleridge says: 'As it must not, so genius cannot, be lawless'; which is the reverse of Lamb's recollection.]

317. TO WILLIAM HONE

[No date: Probably *January or February 1819*.]

DR SIR,

The parody I was mentioning of Terence is in page 271 the Latin & 273 the English—marked with a Pencil—

I will call for Terence as I go by in a day or two.—I cannot read Aristophanes, but he is understood to be full of parodies on Euripides &c.

The Splendid Shilling & the like are to be consider'd I think rather as Parodies of General Heroic Style, than of particular Passages. Tom Thumb has both.

Yours

C. LAMB.

[The first letter to William Hone (1780–1842), the antiquary, bookseller, and publisher, for whom Lamb later did much gratuitous work. Hone had not long since come triumphantly out of his trial for blasphemy, and public sympathy had resulted in a useful gift of money, with which he established himself in premises on Ludgate Hill, and where he issued his successful skit,

The Political House that Jack Built, 1819. Lamb was helping him towards his *History of Parody*, which, however, never took shape, although subscriptions for it were invited. *The Splendid Shilling* was by John Philips, and *Tom Thumb* by Henry Fielding.]

318. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[*This letter is written in black and red ink, changing with each line.*]

[P.M. *26th April 1819.*]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I received a copy of Peter Bell a week ago, and I hope the author will not be offended if I say I do not much relish it. The humour, if it is meant for humour, is forced, and then the price. Sixpence would have been dear for it. Mind, I do not mean *your* Peter Bell, but *a* Peter Bell which preceded it about a week, and is in every bookseller's shop window in London, the type and paper nothing differing from the true one, the preface signed W. W., and the supplementary preface quoting as the author's words an extract from supplementary preface to the Lyrical Balads. Is there no law against these rascals? I would have this Lambert Simnel whipt at the cart's tail. Then there is Rogers! he has been re-writing your Poem of the Stride, and publishing it at the end of his 'Human Life.' Tie him up to the Cart, hangman, while you are about it. Who started the spurious P. B. I have not heard. I should guess, one of the sneering brothers—the vile Smiths—but I have heard no name mentioned. Peter Bell (not the mock one) is excellent. For its matter, I mean. I cannot say that the style of it quite satisfies me. It is too lyrical. The auditors to whom it is feigned to be told, do not *arride me*. I had rather it had been told me, the reader, at once. Hartleap Well is the tale for me, in matter as good as this, in manner infinitely before it, in my poor judgment. Why did you not add the Waggoner? Have I thanked you, though, yet, for Peter Bell? I would not *not have it* for a good deal of money. C—— is very foolish to scribble about books. Neither his tongue nor fingers are very retentive. But I shall not say any thing to him about it. He would only begin a very long story, with a very long face, and I see him far too seldom to teaze him with affairs of business or conscience when I do see him. He

never comes near our house, and when we go to see him, he is generally writing, or thinking he is writing, in his study till the dinner comes, and that is scarce over before the stage summons us away.

The mock P. B. had only this effect on me, that after twice reading it over in hopes to find *some*thing diverting in it, I reach'd your two books off the shelf and set into a steady reading of them, till I had nearly finished both before I went to bed. The two of your last edition, of course, I mean. And in the morning I awoke determining to take down the Excursion. I wish the scoundrel imitator could know this. But why waste a wish on him? I do not believe that paddling about with a stick in a pond and fishing up a dead author whom *his* intolerable wrongs had driven to that deed of desperation, would turn the heart of one of these obtuse literary Bells. There is no Cock for such Peters. Damn 'em. I am glad this aspiration came upon the red ink line. It is more of a bloody curse.

I have delivered over your other presents to Alsager and G. D.—A. I am sure will value it and be proud of the hand from which it came. To G. D. a poem is a poem. His own as good as any bodie's, and god bless him, any bodie's as good as his own, for I do not think he has the most distant guess of the possibility of one poem being better than another. The Gods by denying him the very faculty itself of discrimination have effectually cut off every seed of envy in his bosom. But with envy, they excided Curiosity also, and if you wish the copy again, which you destined for him, I think I shall be able to find it again for you —on his third shelf, where he stuffs his presentation copies, uncut, in shape and matter resembling a lump of dry dust, but on carefully removing that stratum, a thing like a Pamphlet will emerge. I have tried this with fifty different Poetical Works that have been given G. D. in return for as many of his own performances, and I confess I never had any scruple in taking *my own* again wherever I found it, shaking the adherencies off—and by this means one Copy of 'my Works' served for G. D. and with a little dusting was made over to my good friend Dr. Stoddart, who little thought whose leavings he was taking when he made me that graceful bow. By the way, the Doctor is the only one of my acquaintance who bows gracefully, my Town acquaintance I

mean. How do you like my way of writing with two Inks? I think it is pretty and mottley. Suppose Mrs. W. adopts it, the next time she holds the pen for you.

[*The ink differs with every word of the following paragraph:*]

My dinner waits. I have no time to indulge any longer in these laborious curiosities. God bless you and cause to thrive and to burgeon whatsoever you write, and fear no inks of miserable poetasters. Yours truly CHARLES LAMB.

Mary's love.

[The *Peter Bell* to which Lamb refers was written by John Hamilton Reynolds (1796–1852), the friend of Keats, and later Hood's brother-in-law. The parody is a travesty of Wordsworth generally rather than of *Peter Bell*, which had not then been published. James and Horace Smith, of the *Rejected Addresses*, which contained a parody of Wordsworth under the title *The Baby's Debut*, had nothing to do with it; and incidentally let me say that it would be interesting to know why Lamb held these two humorists in such contempt. Lamb's indignation about the parody was shared by Coleridge, who wrote as follows to Taylor & Hessey, the publishers, on 16th April 1819, on the announcement of Reynolds's work:

> DEAR SIRS, I hope, nay I feel confident, that you will interpret this note in the real sense—namely, as a proof of the esteem and respect which I entertain toward you both. Looking in *The Times* this morning I was startled by an advertisement of PETER BELL—a Lyrical Ballad—with a very significant motto from one of our Comedies of Charles the II^nd's reign, tho' what it signifies I wish to ascertain. Peter Bell is a Poem of Mr. Wordsworth's—and I have not heard, that it has been published by him.—If it have, and with his name (I have reason to believe, that he never published anonymously) and this now advertised be a ridicule on it—I have nothing to say—But if it have not, I have ventured to pledge myself for you, that you would not wittingly give the high respectability of your names to an attack on a *Manuscript* work, which no man could assail but by a base breach of trust.

It is stated in the article on Reynolds in the *Dictionary of National Biography* that Coleridge asserted positively that Lamb was the objectionable parodist; but this letter suggests that that was not so. Possibly Coleridge's belief, later, that Lamb was the author of Hood and Reynolds's *Odes and Addresses* led to confusion.

'Peter Bell (not the mock one).' Crabb Robinson's *Diary*, in the original MS., for 6th June 1812, contains this passage:

> With C. Lamb. Lent him *Peter Bell*. To my surprise he finds nothing in it good. He complains of the slowness of the narrative, as if that were not the *art* of the poet. W. he says has great thoughts, but here are none of them. He has no interest in the Ass. These are to me inconceivable judgments from C. L. whose taste in general I acquiesce in and who is certainly an enthusiast for W.

Again, on 11th May 1819, after the poem was published, Robinson says:

> L. spoke of *Peter Bell*, which he considers as one of the worst of Wordsworth's works. The lyric narrative L. has no taste for. He is disgusted by the introduction, which he deems puerile, and the story he thinks ill told, though he allows the idea to be good.

'Rogers.' At the end of Samuel Rogers's poem, *Human Life*, 1819, is a ballad, entitled *The Boy of Egremond*, which has for subject the same incident as that in Wordsworth's *Force of Prayer*, beginning:

> What is good for a bootless bene?

—the death of the Young Romilly as he leapt across the Strid. In Wordsworth the answer to the question is 'Endless sorrow.' Rogers's poem begins:

> 'Say what remains when hope is fled?'
> She answered 'Endless weeping.'

Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* was published a week after the mock one. To *The Waggoner* we shall come shortly.

The significance of the allusion to Coleridge's foolishness in writing about books is not perfectly clear; but it might refer to the elaborate examination of Wordsworth's poetry in the *Biographia Literaria*.

'These obtuse literary Bells.' Peter Bell, in the poem, sounds the river with his staff, and draws forth the dead body of the ass's master. Lamb passes, in his curse, to a reference to St. Peter.

'Taking my own again.' This may be adapted from a saying of Molière's: 'Il m'est permis de reprendre mon bien partout où je le trouve.' Voltaire, Mr. Rendall points out, also has: 'Je prendrai ce qui fut mien où je le trouverai'; but more likely than either the source was again Shakespeare: 'That every man should take his own.'—*Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. ii. 459.]

319. MARY LAMB TO FANNY KELLY

[Dated at end: *6th May 1819*.]

MY DEAR MISS KELLY,

A very pleasant remembrance of you has come to my hands in the shape of a newspaper. The direction is in a good-natured hand-writing which my brother will have it resembles a hand-writing which he has somewhere seen of yours. Whoever favoured me with it (for there is no name) it has brought you into my mind, with the recollection of the one kind evening which you were able to spare us. You have since been a sad wanderer, and are coming home, not exactly I am afraid, to rest yourself, for labour seems to attend you at home and abroad. Such is the

tax which excellence must pay for furnishing an ungrateful world with recreation.

I have heard, I need not say how painfully, that you have been unwell since you left us. It is some satisfaction that you have been able to appear before an Edinborough audience. If those cold northern people do not appear quite to estimate your powers of giving pleasure, you are soon coming home, where one or two at least know how to value them.

I feel particularly awkward in writing to you for the first time, but I could not let pass even a direction on a newspaper, which is like yours, without attempting to reply to it.

I am afraid our poor latin is at a standstill, but I will not mix the angry jealousy of a school-mistress with the different feelings with which I have the pleasure to subscribe myself,

My dear Miss Kelly,

Your sincerely affectionate friend,

M. LAMB.

P.S. My brother joins in kindest regards to you. By the bye, he does not think the style of the Edinborough newspaper so good as that of some other provincial papers.

20, Russel Street, Covent Garden.
6th May, 1819.

[Mary Lamb had been teaching Miss Kelly Latin.
Presumably the dramatic critics of Edinburgh had not been so enthusiastic about Miss Kelly as they should have been.]

320. CHARLES LAMB TO JOHN RICKMAN

E. I. House, *the 21 May, 1819.*

DEAR RICKMAN,

The gentleman who will present this letter holds a situation of considerable importance in the East India House, and is my very good friend. He is desirous of knowing whether it is too late to amend a mere error in figures which he has just discovered in an account made out by him and laid before the House yesterday. He will best explain to you what he means, and I am sure you

will help him to the best of your power. Phillips is too ill for me to think of applying to him.

Why did we not see you last night?

Yours truly,

CHARLES LAMB.

['Last night.' One of Lamb's Thursdays. Rickman was now second Clerk Assistant to the House of Commons. In 1821 he became Clerk Assistant.]

321. TO THOMAS MANNING

MY DEAR M., *May 28, 1819.*

I want to know how your brother is, if you have heard lately. I want to know about you. I wish you were nearer. C. Lloyd is in town with Mrs. LL. anxious of course to see you. She is come for a few days, and projects leaving him here in the care of a man. I fear he will launch out, and heartily wish the scene of his possible exploits were at a remoter distance. But she does not know what to do with him. He run away tother day to come to London alone but was intercepted & now she has brought him. I wish people wouldn't be mad. Could you take a run up to look at him? Would you like to see him? or isn't it better to lean over a style in a sort of careless easy half astronomical position eyeing the blue expanse? How are my cousins, the Gladmans of Wheathamstead, and farmer Bruton? Mrs. Bruton is a glorious woman.

Hail, Mackeray End—

This is a fragment of a blank verse poem which I once meditated, but got no further. The E. I. H. has been thrown into a quandary by the strange phenomenon of poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known man and mad-man twenty-seven years, he being elder here than myself by nine years and more. He was always a pleasant, gossiping, half-headed, muzzy, dozing, dreaming, walk-about, inoffensive chap; a little too fond of the creature—who isn't at times? but Tommy had not brains to work off an over-night's surfeit by ten o'clock next morning, and unfortunately, in he wandered the other morning drunk with last night, and with a superfœtation of drink taken in since he set out from bed. He came staggering under his double burthen,

like trees in Java, bearing at once blossom, fruit, and falling fruit, as I have heard you or some other traveller tell, with his face literally as blue as the bluest firmament; some wretched calico that he had mopped his poor oozy front with had rendered up its native dye, and the devil a bit would he consent to wash it, but swore it was characteristic, for he was going to the sale of indigo, and set up a laugh which I did not think the lungs of mortal man were competent to. It was like a thousand people laughing, or the Goblin Page. He imagined afterwards that the whole office had been laughing at him, so strange did his own sounds strike upon his *non*sensorium. But Tommy has laughed his last laugh, and awoke the next day to find himself reduced from an abused income of £600 per annum to one-sixth of the sum, after thirty-six years' tolerably good service. The quality of mercy was not strained in his behalf; the gentle dews dropt not on him from heaven. It just came across me that I was writing to Canton. How is Ball? 'Mr. B. is a P——.' Will you drop in to-morrow night? Fanny Kelly is coming, if she does not cheat us. Mrs. *Gold* is well, but proves 'uncoined,' as the lovers about Wheathampstead would say.

O hard hearted Burrell
With teeth like a squirrel—

I have not had such a quiet half hour to sit down to a quiet letter for many years. I have not been interrupted above four times. I wrote a letter the other day in alternate lines, black ink and red, and you cannot think how it chilled the flow of ideas. Next Monday is Whit-Monday. What a reflection! Twelve years ago, and I should have kept that and the following holiday in the fields a-Maying. All of those pretty pastoral delights are over. This dead, everlasting dead desk—how it weighs the spirit of a gentleman down! This dead wood of the desk instead of your living trees! But then, again, I hate the Joskins, *a name for Hertfordshire bumpkins.* Each state of life has its inconvenience; but then, again, mine has more than one. Not that I repine, or grudge, or murmur at my destiny. I have meat and drink, and decent apparel; I shall, at least, when I get a new hat.

A red-haired man has just interrupted me. He has broke the current of my thoughts. I haven't a word to add. I don't

know why I send this letter, but I have had a hankering to hear about you some days. Perhaps it will go off, before your reply comes. If it don't, I assure you no letter was ever welcomer from you, from Paris or Macao. C. LAMB.

[Charles Lloyd, resuming his literary activities, published in 1819 his *Nugæ Canoræ*, and mixed in London society, but after two or three years his mind again went astray.

Manning, who had now settled in England, but in retirement, was living in Hertfordshire, at Redbourne, between St. Albans and Wheathampstead. The Gladmans and Brutons are mentioned in the *Elia* essay, 'Mackery End in Hertfordshire':

> The oldest thing I remember is Mackery End; or Mackerel End, as it is spelt, perhaps more properly, in some old maps of Hertfordshire; a farm-house,—delightfully situated within a gentle walk from Wheathampstead. I can just remember having been there, on a visit to a great-aunt, when I was a child, under the care of Bridget; who, as I have said, is older than myself by some ten years. I wish that I could throw into a heap the remainder of our joint existences, that we might share them in equal division. But that is impossible. The house was at that time in the occupation of a substantial yeoman, who had married my grandmother's sister. His name was Gladman. My grandmother was a Bruton, married to a Field. The Gladmans and the Brutons are still flourishing in that part of the county, but the Fields are almost extinct.

The Goblin Page is in Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

'Mrs. *Gold* is well.' *Née* Fanny Burrell.

'This dead wood of the desk.' Lamb used this figure more than once, in his letters and elsewhere. In the *Elia* essay, 'The Superannuated Man,' he says: 'I had grown to my desk, as it were; and the wood had entered into my soul.' And see the end of the letter to Wordsworth of 26th April 1815.

Here is part of Manning's instantaneous reply, with special reference to Mrs. Gould:

[P.M. *30th May 1819.*]

DEAR LAMB,

I took all your letter very kindly, except the word *uncoin'd*—as you & I have *barred* punning, I could not tell at first what to make of it—I 'm afraid it will not pass current. I thought at first you alluded to her not being in a Family way. The phraze was familiar in Dryden's time—'stampt an image.' But what *interest* could you or I take in that? She's not likely to produce young Napoleons, I suppose! Then I exchanged that for another idea—but still *unfavorably*. Just as the circulating medium of my brain was at a standstill, & I feared I must let it aLoan, lo! the restriction (on my understanding) was taken off, (it went off without any *report*) but still I take it *unkind* (of you—to puzzle me so). Nothing in this life, as you justly observe, is without alloy—not even uncoin'd Gold—but let's change the note. Who is that

Mrs. Bruton—the 'glorious woman' you call her. Would you think it, I have ½ a mind to go over to Wethempsted, & inquire about her—only your notice is rather too vague. I know of but one Glorious Woman; & that is in the Revelations; & she wore the sun by way of a Brooche.

The letter continues with a reference to John Lamb the humanitarian and champion of eels.

. . . Take my word for it, to those that know how many yards of Chitterling go to a Dozen Sausages (learnt that phraze of Miss Halloway) no music like the cry of a killing pig. What does your Brother John say to it? He's a man of taste, he loves sausages. For my part I know no better eating, except it be eel-pye. There! there's a *flea* in *his* ear. Let him take care how he raps my Eels about the Costard!

Finally:

I should like to see Mrs. Lloyd very much, & so I should my Friend Charles if I thought I could see him as I wish; otherwise the thought oppresses me. I cannot tell whether a visit from me would really gratify him or not. If I thought it would, I would come & see him directly. . . .

Mrs. Anderson suggests:

'Stampt an image.' Dryden, *Britannia Rediviva*:

> And on their sacred anniverse decreed
> To stamp their image on the promised seed.

but there is a closer reference to Manning's meaning in the same poet's *Alexander's Feast.*

'Brooche.' Revelation xii 1, but not accurate.

'The Costard.' 'Let him take care.'—*King Lear*, II. iv. 125, and IV. vi. 247.

322. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *7th June 1819.*]

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

You cannot imagine how proud we are here of the dedication. We read it twice for once that we do the poem—I mean all through—yet Benjamin is no common favorite—there is a spirit of beautiful tolerance in it—it is as good as it was in 1806—and will be as good in 1829 if our dim eyes shall be awake to peruse it.

Methinks there is a kind of shadowing affinity between the subject of the narrative and the subject of the dedication—but I will not enter into personal themes—else, substituting ****** **** for Ben, and the Honble United Company of Merch^ts trading to the East Indies for the Master of the misused Team,

it might seem by no far fetched analogy to point its dim warnings hitherward—but I reject the omen—especially as its import seems to have been diverted to another victim.

Poor Tommy Bye, whom I have known (as I express'd it in a letter to Manning), man and mad man 27 years—he was my gossip in Leadenhall St.—but too much addicted to turn in at a red lattice—came wandering into his and my common scene of business—you have seen the orderly place—reeling drunk at nine o Clock—with his face of a deep blue, contracted by a filthy dowlas muckinger which had given up its dye to his poor oozy visnomy—and short to tell, after playing various pranks, laughing loud laughters three—mad explosions they were—in the following morning the 'tear stood in his ee'—for he found his abused income of clear £600 inexorably reduced to £100—he was my dear gossip—alas! Benjamin! . . .

I will never write another letter with alternate inks. You cannot imagine how it cramps the flow of the style. I can conceive Pindar (I do not mean to compare myself [to] *him*) by the command of Hiero, the Sicilian tyrant (was not he the tyrant of some place? fie on my neglect of history—) conceive him by command of Hiero, or Perillus, set down to pen an Isthmian or Nemean Panegyre in lines alternate red and black. I maintain he couldn't have done it—it would have been a strait laced torture to his muse, he would have call'd for the Bull for a relief. Neither could Lycidas, or the Chorics (how do you like the word?) of Samson Agonistes, have been written with two inks. Your couplets with points, Epilogues to Mr. H.s, &c. might be even benefited by the twyfount. Where one line (the second) is for point, and the first for rhime, I think the alternation would assist, like a mould. I maintain it, you could not have written your stanzas on pre existence with 2 inks. Try another, and Rogers the Banker, with his silver standish having one ink only, I will bet my Ode on Tobacco, against the Pleasures of Memory—and Hope too—shall put more fervor of enthusiasm into the same subject than you can with your two—he shall do it stans pede in uno as it were.

The Waggoner is very ill put up in boards, at least it seems to me always to open at the dedication—but that is a mechanical fault.

I re-read the White Doe of Rylston—the title should be always

written at length—as Mary Sabilla Novello, a very nice woman of our acquaintance, always signs hers at the bottom of the shortest note. Mary told her, if her name had been Mary Ann, she would have signed M. A. Novello, or M. only, dropping the A—which makes me think, with some other triflings, that she understands something of human nature. My pen goes galloping on most rhapsodically, glad to have escaped the bondage of Two Inks.

Manning had just sent it home and it came as fresh to me as the immortal creature it speaks of. M. sent it home with a note, having this passage in it, 'I cannot help writing to you while I am reading Wordsw^ths poem. I am got into the 3rd Canto, and say that it raises my opinion of him very much indeed. ✠ 'Tis broad; noble; poetical; with a masterly scanning of human actions, absolutely above common readers. What a manly (implied) interpretation of (bad) party-actions, as trampling the bible, &c.'—and so he goes on.

✠ N.B. M—— from his peregrinations is 12 or 14 years *behind* in his knowledge of who has or has not written good verse of late.

I do not know which I like best, the prologue (the latter part specially) to P. Bell, or the Epilogue to Benjamin. Yes, I tell stories, I do know. I like the last best, and the Waggoner altogether as a pleasanter remembrance to me than the Itinerant. If it were not, the page before the first page would and ought to make it so.

The sonnets are not all new to me. Of what are, the 9th I like best. Thank you for that to Walton. I take it as a favor done to me, that, being so old a darling of mine, you should bear testimony to his worth in a book containing a dedi——

I cannot write the vain word at full length any longer.

If as you say, the Waggoner in some sort came at my call, O for a potent voice to call forth the Recluse from his profound Dormitory, where he sleeps forgetful of his foolish charge The World.

Had I three inks I would invoke him!

Talfourd has written a most kind Review of J. Woodvil, &c., in the Champion. He is your most zealous admirer, in solitude and in crowds. H. Crabbe Robinson gives me any dear Prints that I happen to admire, and I love him for it and for other things. Alsager shall have his copy, but at present I have lent it *for a day*

only, not chusing to part with my own. Mary's love. How do you all do, amanuenses both—marital and sororal?

C. LAMB.

[Wordsworth had just put forth *The Waggoner*, which was dedicated to Lamb in the following terms:

My DEAR FRIEND—When I sent you, a few weeks ago, the tale of Peter Bell, you asked 'why *The Waggoner* was not added?'—To say the truth, from the higher tone of imagination, and the deeper touches of passion aimed at in the former, I apprehended this little Piece could not accompany it without disadvantage. In the year 1806, if I am not mistaken, *The Waggoner* was read to you in manuscript, and as you have remembered it for so long a time, I am the more encouraged to hope that, since the localities on which the Poem partly depends did not prevent its being interesting to you, it may prove acceptable to others. Being, therefore, in some measure the cause of its present appearance, you must allow me the gratification of inscribing it to you, in acknowledgment of the pleasure I have derived from your Writings, and of the high esteem with which

I am very truly yours,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

The poem, which had been written many years before, tells the story of Benjamin, a waggoner in the Lake county, who one stormy night, succumbing to the temptations of the Cherry Tree Inn, fell from good estate. Lamb's asterisks stand, of course, for Charles Lamb.

'Your stanzas on pre existence.' The *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*.

The Pleasures of Hope was Campbell's poem. *The Pleasures of Memory* by Rogers had, by that time, gone through many editions.

Mary Sabilla Novello was the wife of Vincent Novello, the organist, and Lamb's friend.

'Pindar.' Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum, kept a brazen bull for the purpose of roasting criminals. Lamb has confused him with Perillus, the Athenian worker in metal, who made the bull. Lamb suggests that, to Pindar, insertion in the bull would have been less of a torture than writing with two inks.

'Stans pede in uno,' i.e. with great facility, a proverbial expression which Horace uses of the rapid dictation by Lucilius of his verses, *Satires*, I. iv. 10. In *The 'Lepus' Papers*, Lamb ranks standing on one leg with ignoble diversions.

The White Doe of Rylstone had been published in 1815.

The 9th sonnet. Certain sonnets had been published with *The Waggoner*. The ninth was that beginning:

Grief, thou hast lost an ever-ready Friend.

Wordsworth's sonnet upon Walton begins:

While flowing rivers yield a blameless sport.

The Recluse was not published until 1888, and then only Book i.

'Had I three inks.' 'Had I three ears . . .'—*Macbeth*, IV. i. 78.

The *Champion*, in which Talfourd reviewed Lamb's *Works*, had now become the property of John Thelwall.]

323. TO FANNY KELLY

[Dated at end: *9th July 1819.*]

DEAR MISS KELLY,

If your Bones are not engaged on Monday night, will you favor us with the use of them? I know, if you can oblige us, you will make no bones of it; if you cannot, it shall break none betwixt us. We might ask somebody else, but we do not like the bones of any strange animal. We should be welcome to dear Mrs. Liston's, but then she is so plump, there is no getting at them. I should prefer Miss Iver's—they must be ivory I take it for granted—but she is married to Mr xxx, and become bone of his bone, consequently can have none of her own to dispose of. Well, it all comes to this,—if you can let us have them, you will, I dare say; if you cannot, God rest your bones. I am almost at the end of my bon-mots.

C. LAMB.

[The free passes to the theatre were of bone or ivory.

The letter that follows may be called the most interesting that Lamb ever wrote. He was then forty-four years of age and in receipt of a salary of £600. Fanny Kelly would be twenty-nine on 15th October. That Lamb had been pondering his offer for some little time is suggested, the late William Macdonald remarked, by a passage in one of his articles on Miss Kelly in the *Examiner* earlier in this month, where he says of her as Rachel, in *The Jovial Crew*, probably with full knowledge that it would meet her eye and be understood (a truly Elian method of love-lettering): '"What a lass that were," said a stranger who sate beside us . . . "to go a gipseying through the world with."' And in the same paper, where Leigh Hunt would let Lamb put anything he wanted, I find, in the number for 20th December 1818 the following note, which I feel very confident was written by Lamb:

> It was with a feeling of pain, that we observed Miss Kelly among the SPECTATORS on the first night of the new comedy. What does she do before the curtain? She should have been on the stage. With such youth, such talents.
>
> Those powers of pleasing, with that will to please. It is too much that she should be forgotten, discarded, laid aside like an old fashion. It really is not yet the season for her 'among the wastes of time to go.' Is it Mr. —— or the Sub-committee; or what Heavy Body is it, which interposes itself between us and this light of the stage?

324. TO FANNY KELLY

20 July, 1819.

DEAR MISS KELLY,

We had the pleasure, *pain* I might better call it, of seeing you last night in the new Play. It was a most consummate piece of Acting, but what a task for you to undergo! at a time when your heart is sore from real sorrow! it has given rise to a train of thinking, which I cannot suppress.

Would to God you were released from this way of life; that you could bring your mind to consent to take your lot with us, and throw off for ever the whole burden of your Profession. I neither expect or wish you to take notice of this which I am writing, in your present over occupied & hurried state.—But to think of it at your leisure. I have quite income enough, if that were all, to justify for me making such a proposal, with what I may call even a handsome provision for my survivor. What you possess of your own would naturally be appropriated to those, for whose sakes chiefly you have made so many hard sacrifices. I am not so foolish as not to know that I am a most unworthy match for such a one as you, but you have for years been a principal object in my mind. In many a sweet assumed character I have learned to love you, but simply as F. M. Kelly I love you better than them all. Can you quit these shadows of existence, & come & be a reality to us? can you leave off harassing yourself to please a thankless multitude, who know nothing of you, & begin at last to live to yourself & your friends?

As plainly & frankly as I have seen you give or refuse assent in some feigned scene, so frankly do me the justice to answer me. It is impossible I should feel injured or aggrieved by your telling me at once, that the proposal does not suit you. It is impossible that I should ever think of molesting you with idle importunity and persecution after your mind [was] once firmly spoken—but happier, far happier, could I have leave to hope a time might come, when our friends might be your friends; our interests yours; our book-knowledge, if in that inconsiderable particular we have any little advantage, might impart something to you, which you would every day have it in your power ten thousand fold to repay by the added cheerfulness and joy which you could

not fail to bring as a dowry into whatever family should have the honor and happiness of receiving *you*, the most welcome accession that could be made to it.

In haste, but with entire respect & deepest affection, I subscribe myself,

C. LAMB.

[This was Miss Kelly's reply:

Henrietta Street, *20th July, 1819.*

An early & deeply rooted attachment has fixed my heart on one from whom no worldly prospect can well induce me to withdraw it, but while I thus *frankly* & decidedly decline your proposal, believe me, I am not insensible to the high honour which the preference of such a mind as yours confers upon me—let me, however, hope that all thought upon this subject will end with this letter, & that you will henceforth encourage no other sentiment towards me than esteem in my private character and a continuance of that approbation of my humble talents which you have already expressed so much & so often to my advantage and gratification.

Believe me I feel proud to acknowledge myself

Your obliged friend

F. M. KELLY.

Lamb at once wrote again as follows, in a far less steady hand than that in which the proposal was made:]

325. TO FANNY KELLY

DEAR MISS KELLY, *July 20th, 1819.*

Your injunctions shall be obeyed to a tittle. I feel myself in a lackadaisacal no-how-ish kind of a humour. I believe it is the rain, or something. I had thought to have written seriously, but I fancy I succeed best in epistles of mere fun; puns & *that* nonsense. You will be good friends with us, will you not? let what has past 'break no bones' between us. You will not refuse us them next time we send for them?

Yours very truly, C. L.

Do you observe the delicacy of not signing my full name? N.B. Do not paste that last letter of mine into your Book.

[Writing again of Miss Kelly, in *The Hypocrite*, in the *Examiner* of 1st and 2nd August, Lamb says: 'She is in truth not framed to tease or torment even in jest, but to utter a hearty *Yes* or *No*; to yield or refuse assent with a noble sincerity. We have not the pleasure of being acquainted with her, but we have been told that she carries the same cordial manners into private life.'

Writing to her sister Lydia ten days after her reply to Lamb, Miss Kelly says: 'Yesterday I saw the Lambs for the first time, except from the stage, since his recent offer of marriage. I was indeed sorry to refuse him, for he shows the most tender and loyal affections. But even at the peril of my decision causing him great despondency, which I rather feared, I could have no other course than to say the truth that I could not accept his offer. I could not give my assent to a proposal which would bring me into that atmosphere of sad mental uncertainty which surrounds his domestic life. Marriage might well bring to us both added causes for misery and regrets in later years.'

This was Lamb's last excursion into the realms of romance; but Miss Kelly, although she never married, entered into a liaison some ten years later, and became the mother of an only daughter, born at Edinburgh early in April 1829, to whom the name Mary Ellen Thatcher Gerbine was given, afterwards changed to Greville, who inherited all Fanny Kelly's property. Miss Kelly died at the age of ninety-two in 1882.

See *Lamb's Barbara S——*, by L. E. Holman, 1935, for the full story of Miss Kelly's career.]

326. TO THOMAS NOON TALFOURD (?)

DEAR T., [*August 1819.*]

We are at Mr. Bays's, Hatter, Trumpington Street, Cambridge. Can you come down? You will be with us, all but Bed, which you can get at an Inn. We shall be most glad to see you. Be so good as send me Hazlit's volume, just published at Hone's, directed as above. Or, much better, bring it.

Yours, hic et ubique,

C. LAMB.

[This note proves that Lamb was in Cambridge in 1819. The evidence is that the only book by Hazlitt which Hone published was *Political Essays, with Sketches by Public Characters*, printed for William Hone, 45 Ludgate Hill, 1819. If then Hazlitt's book determines the year, we may take the testimony of the sonnet 'Written at Cambridge, 15th August, 1819' as to the month.

The letter has further value in adding another Lamb domicile to the list, Mr. Bays's house being still in existence, although no longer in Trumpington Street, but King's Parade.

'T.' was probably Talfourd, who had just been writing an enthusiastic review of Lamb's *John Woodvil* in the *Champion* and was only too happy to serve his hero in any way.

'Hic et ubique': Here and everywhere.—*Hamlet*, I. v. 155.]

327. TO THOMAS HOLCROFT, JUN.

DR. TOM, [No date: *Autumn 1819.*]

Do not come to us on Thursday, for we are moved into country lodgings, tho' I am still at the India house in the mornings. See Marshall and Captain Betham *as soon as ever you can.* I fear leave cannot be obtained at the India house for your going to India. If you go it must be as captain's clerk, if such a thing could be obtain'd.

For God's sake keep your present place and do not give it up, or neglect it; as you perhaps will not be able to go to India, and you see how difficult of attainment situations are.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Addressed] By favour of Mr. W. Godwin, Jnr.

[It would seem that young Holcroft, the son of Lamb's friend, lost his place, which was some small Parliamentary post under Rickman, in November 1819—as the following letter just received from America, too late for consecutive numbering, proves. I put it here as it applies to the matter in hand:]

327A. TO BASIL MONTAGU

DEAR MONTAGU, Dated: *November 7* [*1819*].

I must beg you most earnestly if you have any writing businefs to give away, that you will think of poor Tom Holcroft, who is entirely out of employ & thrown upon the wide Town, with nothing to do. He is a lad of fine spirit, and has an appetite disproportionate to his finances. He will most gladly take any copying work, Attorney's work or anything. I conjure you to do what you can for him. His prime object is to go out to his brother in India, but meantime he utterly wants subsistence. You will say I never write to you, but when I want a favour. I was most sorry to hear that Mrs. M. has been unwell, & we should have called to day, but are going out for all day. Tom's lodgings are at a Snuffshop ? fetter Lane. May I send him to you?

Yours sincerely

C. LAMB.

[Later, Crabb Robinson, Anthony Robinson, and Lamb took up the matter and subscribed money, and Holcroft went out to India.

We come now to a problem which confronts all editors of Lamb's correspondence. I refer to the letters to Thomas Allsop, who, in 1819, was a young man of twenty-four, a very generous and well-to-do silk merchant, who was to become known as Coleridge's 'favourite disciple.' According to Crabb Robinson, the acquaintance between Allsop and Coleridge began when Allsop gave the poet £100 in admiration of his genius. In his *Letters, Conversations and Recollections of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 1836, Allsop tells us that the first night he ever spent with Lamb was after a visit to Coleridge, at Highgate, when, 'from something I had said or done of an unusual kind,' they returned by the same stage and Lamb put him up; and it was soon after then that Allsop contracted the habit of sending him game. The difficulty of placing correctly the many notes from Lamb to Allsop—more than fifty in all—is that Lamb, in addition to misspelling his new friend's name, was almost scrupulous in adding no date, and postmarks too rarely assist.

A number of undated missives follow.]

328–42. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

DR. SIR,

Your hare arrived in excellent order last night, and I hope will prove the precursor of yourself on Sunday.

Why you should think it necessary to appease us with so many pleasant presents, I know not.

More acknowledgmts when we meet.

We dine at 3.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

DR. SIR,

We are most sorry to have miss'd you twice. We are at home tonight, tomorrow, & Thursday—& should be happy to see you any of these nights. Thanks for the shining Bird.

Yours truly

C. L.

MY DEAR SIR,

We shall hope to see you tomorrow evening to a rubber. Thanks for your very kind letter, and intentions respecting a bird.

Yours very truly,

C. LAMB.

DR. SIR,

You shall see us on Thursday, with M. B. [Martin Burney] possibly about 8. We shall have Tea-ed.

Yours truly,

C L

M. B.'s direction is 26 James Street. *James* not *St. James St.*

DEAR SIR,

The *hairs* of our head are numbered, but those which emanate from your heart defy arithmetic. I would send longer thanks but your young man is blowing his fingers in the Passage.

Yours gratefully

C. L.

DEAR ALLSOP,

Mary will take her chance of an early lunch or dinner with you on Thursday: She can't come on Wednesday. If I can, I will fetch her home. But I am near killed with Christmasing; and, if incompetent, your kindness will excuse me. I can scarce set foot to ground for a cramp that I took me last night.

Yours,

C. LAMB.

India House.

DEAR SIR,

I hear that you have called in Russell Street. I cannot say when I shall be in town. When I am, I must see you; I had hoped to have seen you at Dalston, but my Sister is taken ill, I am afraid will not be able to see any of her friends for a long time.

Believe me, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Monday Evening.

DEAR ALLSOP,

Your pheasant is glittering, but your company will be more acceptable this evening. Wordsworth is not with us, but the next things to him are.

C. LAMB.

DR. A.,

Tomorrow, if you please, at 4.

I walk all the morning, but come home hungry to dinner, as I hope to find you both

Yours Ever CL

Good Thursday

Ecce Iterum

DR. SIR,

I fear I was obscure. I was plaguily busy when those tempting birds came—I mean to say I could not come this Evening, but any other if I can know a day before, I can come for 2 or 3

afternoon hours for ½ four to ½ past six. at present I can not command more furlough. I have nam'd Saturd & will come, if you dont countermand, *I shall have dined.* I have been wanting not *not to see you.*

C. L.

['Ecce Iterum.' 'Here I am again.' The words begin Juvenal's fourth *Satire.*]

Monday Evening.

DEAR ALLSOP,

We are going to Dalston on Wednesday. Will you come see the last of us to-morrow night—you and Mrs Allsop?

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

DR. SIR,

Thanks for the Birds and your kindness. It was but yesterdy. I was contriving with Talfd to meet you ½ way at his chamber. But night don't do so well at present. I shall want to be home at Dalston by Eight.

I will pay an afternoon visit to you when you please. I dine at a chop-house at ONE always, but I can spend an hour with you after that.

Yours truly

C. L.

Would Saturdy serve?

DEAR ALLSOP,

My injunctions about not calling here had solely reference to your being unwell, &c. at home. I am most glad to see you on my own account. I dine at 3 on either Sunday; come then, or earlier or later; only before dinner I generally walk. Your dining here will be quite convenient. I of course have a Joint that day. I owe you for Newspapers, Cobbetts, pheasants, what not?

Yours Most Obliged,

C. L.

P.S. I am so well (except Rheumatism, which forbids my being out on evenings) that I forgot to mention my health in the above. Mary is very poorly yet. Love to Mrs Allsop.

DEAR SIR,

We expected you here to-night; but as you have invited us to-morrow evening, we shall dispose of this evening as we intended to have done of to-morrow. We shall be with you by 8, and shall have taken Tea.

Your (not obliging but obliged)
C. and M. LAMB.

DEAR SIR,

I have brought you Rosamund, Bp. of Landaff's daughter's novel. We shall have a small party, on Thursday evening, if you will do us the favour to join it. Yours truly, C. LAMB.

[The Bishop of Llandaff was William Watson, and there is a further reference to the novel on p. 271 in a later letter from Mary Lamb.]

343. CHARLES LAMB TO JOSEPH COTTLE

[Dated at end: *5th November 1819*.]

DEAR SIR,

It is so long since I have seen or heard from you, that I fear that you will consider a request I have to make as impertinent. About three years since, when I was one day at Bristol, I made an effort to see you, but you were from home. The request I have to make is, that you would very much oblige me, if you have any small portrait of yourself, by allowing me to have it copied, to accompany a selection of 'Likenesses of Living Bards' which a most particular friend of mine is making. If you have no objections, and could oblige me by transmitting such portrait to me at No. 44 Russell Street, Covent Garden, I will answer for taking the greatest care of it, and returning it safely the instant the Copier has done with it. I hope you will pardon the liberty

From an old friend
and well-wisher,
CHARLES LAMB.

[Lamb's visit to Bristol was made probably when he was staying at Calne with the Morgans in 1816. The present letter refers to an extra illustrated copy of Byron's *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which was being made by William Evans, of the *Pamphleteer*, and which is now in the British Museum. Owing to Cottle's hostility to Byron, and Byron's scorn of Cottle, Lamb could hardly explain the nature of the book more fully. See note to the following letter.

Mrs. Anderson's note says that Cottle's reply ran thus:

Joseph Cottle sends a hasty line to his Old Friend Charles Lamb, to say that he will comply with his request, by sending his portrait in about a fortnight.

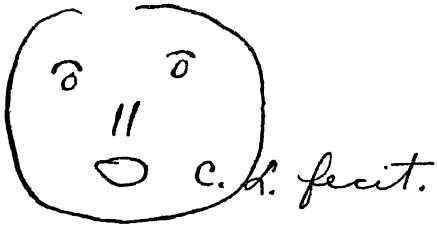
It would have given J. C. the sincerest pleasure to have C. L. at the time he mentioned. If ever he should come again to Bristol, he hope he will allow him to testify some of those civilities which accord so much with his wishes.

Bristol, Brunswick Sqr. Nov. 22nd 1819.

The following is a fragment of a letter seemingly addressed by Lamb to William Evans:]

344. TO WILLIAM EVANS (?)

P.S. Mr. White has a catalogue which he will be happy to shew you of prints to illustrate English Bards & Scotch Reviewers, which are to be sold in a few days at Leigh & Sotheby. Have you heard of 'em? I send you a portrait of Joseph Cottle from memory.



The lips should be a little thicker & perhaps the left eye has hardly justice done it but I should only spoil it by tampering with it.

345. TO JOSEPH COTTLE

DEAR SIR, [Not dated: *? Late 1819.*]

My friend whom you have obliged by the loan of your picture, having had it very exactly copied (and a very spirited Drawing it is, as every one thinks that has seen it—the copy is not much inferior, done by a daughter of Josephs, R.A.)—he purposes sending you back the original, which I must accompany with my warm thanks, both for that, and your better favor, the 'Messiah,' which, I assure you, I have read thro' with great pleasure; the verses have great sweetness and a New Testament-plainness about them which affected me very much.

I could just wish that in page 63 you had omitted the lines 71 and '2, and had ended the period with

> The willowy brook was there, but that sweet sound—
> *When* to be heard again on Earthly ground?—

two very sweet lines, and the sense perfect.

And in page 154, line 68, 'I come *ordained a world to save,*'—these words are hardly borne out by the story, and seem scarce accordant with the modesty with which our Lord came to take his common portion among the Baptismal Candidates. They also anticipate the beauty of John's recognition of the Messiah, and the subsequent confirmation from the voice and Dove.

You will excuse the remarks of an old brother bard, whose career, though long since pretty well stopt, was coeval in its beginning with your own, and who is sorry his lot has been always to be so distant from you. It is not likely that C. L. will ever see Bristol again; but, if J. C. should ever visit London, he will be a most welcome visitor to C. L.

My sister joins in cordial remembrances and I request the favor of knowing, at your earliest opportunity, whether the Portrait arrives safe, the glass unbroken &c. Your glass broke in its coming.

Morgan is a little better—can read a little, &c.; but cannot join Mrs. M. till the Insolvent Act (or whatever it is called) takes place. Then, I hope, he will stand clear of all debts. Meantime, he has a most exemplary nurse and kind Companion in Miss Brent.

Once more, Dr Sir,

Yours truly C. LAMB.

[Cottle sent Lamb a miniature of himself by Branwhite, which had been copied in monochrome for Mr. Evans's book. G. J. Joseph, A.R.A., made a coloured drawing of Lamb for the same work. Byron's lines in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, refer compositely both to Joseph and Amos Cottle:

> O, Amos Cottle!—Phœbus! what a name.

and so forth. Mr. Evans, however, managed to get along without Amos. Another grangerized edition of the same satire, also in the British Museum, compiled by W. M. Tartt, has an engraving of Amos Cottle and two portraits of Lamb—the Hancock drawing, and the Brook Pulham etched caricature. Byron's lines touching Lamb ran thus:

> Yet let them not to vulgar Wordsworth stoop,
> The meanest object of the lowly group,

Whose verse, of all but childish prattle void,
Seems blessed harmony to Lambe and Lloyd.

In the fifth edition Lambe lost his 'e'.

A footnote states that Lamb and Lloyd are 'the most ignoble followers of Southey & Co.'

Cottle's *Messiah*, of which the earlier portion had been published long before, was completed in 1815. Canon Ainger says that lines 71 and 72 in Lamb's copy (not that of 1815), following upon the couplet quoted, were:

(While sorrow gave th' involuntary tear)
Had ceased to vibrate on our listening ear.

Coleridge's friend Morgan had just come upon evil times. Subsequently Lamb and Southey united in helping him to the extent of £10 a year each.]

346. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[No date: *? November 1819.*]

DEAR SIR,

I feel ashamed at this application to you. I have no right to make it. But I feel I cannot resist it. I have a God Son, a Nephew, a very fine youth, who is out of employ. The establishment with which he was connected is suddenly broke up. He wants employment. If by your city interest you could introduce him into any Clerkly employment, how much I should feel obliged! I hate myself for asking a favour. I would not for myself. Pray, believe me that if this is not in your power, never shall I cease to love and respect you.

C. LAMB.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'This letter is of great interest, as, if Lamb really meant Nephew as we understand the word, he can only have referred to a natural son of his brother John, born, say, about 1800.']

347. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[Dated at end: *29th November 1819.*]

DEAR SIR,

Many thanks for your offer. I have desired the youth to wait upon you, if you will give him leave, that he may give his own answer to your kind proposal of trying to find something for him. My sister begs you will accept her thanks with mine. We shall be at home at all times, most happy to see you when you are in town. We are mostly to be found in an evening.

Your obliged,

C. LAMB.

Saturday, November 29, 1819.

348. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *25th November 1819.*]

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

You will think me negligent, but I wanted to see more of Willy, before I ventured to express a prediction. Till yesterday I had barely seen him—Virgilium Tantum Vidi—but yesterday he gave us his small company to a bullock's heart—and I can pronounce him a lad of promise. He is no pedant nor bookworm, so far I can answer. Perhaps he has hitherto paid too little attention to other men's inventions, preferring, like Lord Foppington, the 'natural sprouts of his own.' But he has observation, and seems thoroughly awake. I am ill at remembering other people's bon mots, but the following are a few. Being taken over Waterloo Bridge, he remarked that if we had no mountains, we had a fine river at least, which was a Touch of the Comparative, but then he added, in a strain which augured less for his future abilities as a Political Economist, that he supposed they must take at least a pound a week Toll. Like a curious naturalist he inquired if the tide did not come up a little salty. This being satisfactorily answered, he put another question as to the flux and reflux, which being rather cunningly evaded than artfully solved by that she-Aristotle Mary, who muttered something about its getting up an hour sooner and sooner every day, he sagely replied, 'Then it must come to the same thing at last,' which was a speech worthy of an infant Halley! The Lion in the 'Change by no means came up to his ideal standard. So impossible it is for Nature in any of her works to come up to the standard of a child's imagination. The whelps (Lionets) he was sorry to find were dead, and on particular enquiry his old friend the Ouran Outang had gone the way of all flesh also. The grand Tiger was also sick, and expected in no short time to exchange this transitory world for another—or none. But again, there was a Golden Eagle (I do not mean that of Charing) which did much arride and console him. William's genius, I take it, leans a little to the figurative, for being at play at Tricktrack (a kind of minor Billiard-table which we keep for smaller wights, and sometimes refresh our own mature fatigues with taking a hand at), not being able to hit a ball he had iterate aimed at, he

cried out, 'I cannot hit that beast.' Now the balls are usually called men, but he felicitously hit upon a middle term, a term of approximation and imaginative reconciliation, a something where the two ends, of the brute matter (ivory) and their human and rather violent personification into *men*, might meet, as I take it, illustrative of that Excellent remark in a certain Preface about Imagination, explaining 'like a sea-beast that had crawled forth to sun himself.' Not that I accuse William Minor of hereditary plagiary, or conceive the image to have come ex traduce. Rather he seemeth to keep aloof from any source of imitation, and purposely to remain ignorant of what mighty poets have done in this kind before him. For being asked if his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge, he answer'd that he did not know.

It is hard to discern the Oak in the Acorn, or a Temple like St. Paul's in the first stone which is laid, nor can I quite prefigure what destination the genius of William Minor hath to take. Some few hints I have set down, to guide my future observations. He hath the power of calculation in no ordinary degree for a chit. He combineth figures, after the first boggle, rapidly. As in the Tricktrack board, where the hits are figured, at first he did not perceive that 15 and 7 made 22, but by a little use he could combine 8 with 25—and 33 again with 16, which approacheth something in kind (far let me be from flattering him by saying in degree) to that of the famous American boy. I am sometimes inclined to think I perceive the future satirist in him, for he hath a sub-sardonic smile which bursteth out upon occasion, as when he was asked if London were as big as Ambleside, and indeed no other answer was given, or proper to be given, to so ensnaring and provoking a question. In the contour of scull certainly I discern something paternal. But whether in all respects the future man shall transcend his father's fame, Time the trier of geniuses must decide. Be it pronounced peremptorily at present, that Willy is a well-mannerd child, and though no great student, hath yet a lively eye for things that lie before him. Given in haste from my desk at Leadenhall. Your's and yours' most sincerely

C. LAMB.

[This letter, which refers to a visit paid to the Lambs in Great Russell Street by Wordsworth's son, William, then nine years old, is remarkable,

apart from its charm and humour, for containing more of the absolute method of certain of Lamb's *Elia* passages than anything he had yet written.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Mrs. Clarkson to H. Crabb Robinson, 3rd January 1820: "You have heard I daresay that W.'s youngest boy is with Mr. Johnson at the Central School in Baldwin's Gardens. In May he is to be placed at the Charterhouse. If you are disposed to visit him you will find Mr. Johnson a most pleasing man & the school if you have never seen it a high treat. Mr. Wordsworth's name will be a sufficient introduction as it ought to be."'

A word or so on the excursion in London may be added. The 'Lion in the 'Change' is a reference to Cross's menagerie at Exeter 'Change in the Strand. I fancy Lamb's pen slipped when he refers to the Golden Eagle at Charing Cross: I think he had either the Golden Cross Inn or the Cross itself in his mind.

'Virgilium tantum vidi.' The sense is given in the English words. The quotation is from Ovid, *Tristia*, iv. x. 51, 'Virgilium vidi tantum.' Lamb uses it of Gray in the *Elia* essay, 'Amicus redivivus.'

'Lord Foppington.' In Vanbrugh's *Relapse*. Lamb used this speech as the motto of his *Elia* essay, 'Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading.'

'Like a sea-beast.' Lamb alludes to the preface in the edition of 1815 of Wordsworth's poems, where he quotes illustratively from his *Resolution and Independence*:

> Like a sea-beast crawled forth, that on a shelf
> Of rock or sand reposeth, there to sun itself.

'If his father had ever been on Westminster Bridge.' An allusion to Wordsworth's sonnet *Composed upon Westminster Bridge*:

> Earth has not anything to show more fair.

'The American boy.' This was Zerah Colburn, the mathematical prodigy, born in Vermont State in 1804, and exhibited in America and Europe by his father.]

349. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

Jan. 10th, 1820.

DEAR COLERIDGE,

A Letter written in the blood of your poor friend would indeed be of a nature to startle you; but this is nought but harmless red ink, or, as the witty mercantile phrase hath it, Clerk's Blood. Damn 'em! my brain, guts, skin, flesh, bone, carcase, soul, TIME, is all theirs. The Royal Exchange, Gresham's Folly, hath me body and spirit. I admire some of Lloyd's lines on you, and I admire your postponing reading them. He is a sad Tattler, but this is under the rose. Twenty years ago he estranged one friend from me quite, whom I have been regretting, but

never could regain since; he almost alienated you (also) from me, or me from you, I don't know which. But that breach is closed. The dreary sea is filled up. He has lately been at work 'telling again,' as they call it, a most gratuitous piece of mischief, and has caused a coolness betwixt me and (not a friend exactly, but) intimate acquaintance. I suspect, also, he saps Manning's faith in me, who am to Manning more than an acquaintance. Still I like his writing verses about you. Will your kind host and hostess give us a dinner next Sunday, and better still, *not expect us* if the weather is very bad. Why you should refuse twenty guineas per sheet for Blackwood's or any other magazine passes my poor comprehension. But, as Strap says, you know best. I have no quarrel with you about præprandial avocations—so don't imagine one. That Manchester sonnet I think very likely is Capel Lofft's. Another sonnet appeared with the same initials in the same paper, which turned out to be Procter's. What do the rascals mean? Am I to have the fathering of what idle rhymes every beggarly Poetaster pours forth! Who put your marine sonnet and about Browne into 'Blackwood'? I did not. So no more, till we meet.

Ever yours, C. L.

[Charles Lloyd, more or less returned to health, had written *Desultory Thoughts in London*, in which both Coleridge and Lamb appeared, Coleridge as *** and Lamb as **. The poem was published in 1821. Lloyd probably had sent it in manuscript or proof to Lamb and Coleridge. Some of Lloyd's lines on Coleridge run thus:

How shall I fitly speak on such a theme?
He is a treasure by the world neglected,
Because he hath not, with a prescience dim,
Like those whose every aim is self-reflected,
Pil'd up some fastuous trophy, that of him
Might tell, what mighty powers the age rejected.
But taught his lips the office of a *pen*—
By fools he's deem'd a being lost to men.

.

No! with magnanimous self-sacrifice,
And lofty inadvertency of fame,
He felt there is a bliss in *being* wise,
Quite independent of the wise man's *name*.
Who now can say how many a soul may rise
To a nobility of moral aim

It ne'er had known, but for that spirit brave,
Which, being freely gifted, freely gave?

Sometimes I think that I'm a blossom blighted;
But this I ken, that should it not prove so,
If I am not inexorably spited
Of all that dignifies mankind below;
By him I speak of, I was so excited,
While reason's scale was poising to and fro,
'To the better cause'; that him I have to bless
For that which it is comfort to possess.

.

No! Those who most have seen me, since the hour
When thou and I, in former happier days,
Frank converse held, though many an adverse power
Have sought the memory of those times to raze,
Can vouch that more it stirs me (thus a tower,
Sole remnant of vast castle, still betrays
Haply its former splendour) to have prov'd
Thy love, than by fresh friends to have been lov'd.

The story of one of Lloyd's former indiscretions is told in the earlier letters of this collection. I cannot say what friend he quite alienated, unless it was James White. The nature of the later offence of which Lamb accuses Lloyd is now unknown.

'The dreary sea.' From *Christabel*.

Strap was a schoolfellow of Roderick Random in Smollett's novel of that name. He was an assistant to a barber at Newcastle when he was rediscovered by Roderick Random—after which they carried on an adventurous career together, until Strap married Miss Williams in the last chapter.

'That Manchester sonnet.' A sonnet entitled *Manchester*, referring to the Luddites, and signed C. L., by Capel Lofft, jurist, versifier, and critic and also pilloried in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*. Procter's 'C. L.' sonnet was upon Macready.

The marine sonnet was *Fancy in Nubibus* (see Letter 307). 'About Browne' refers to a note by Coleridge on Sir Thomas Browne in the same number, signed G. J.—possibly James Gillman's initials reversed.

We learn from a letter from Coleridge to J. H. Green (14th January 1820) that the visit to Highgate which Lamb mentions was a New Year visit of annual occurrence. Lamb's reference to præprandial avocations touches upon Coleridge's habit of coming down to see his guests only when dinner was ready.

The paucity of letters at this time was due, I imagine, to the fact that Lamb must have been busy in preparing his first *Elia* essay: that on the South Sea House for the *London Magazine's* number for August 1820; and hereafter for a long while we can think of him as always having his *Elia* work on hand.]

350. MARY LAMB TO FANNY KELLY

[P.M. *28th March 1820.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

We have forwarded the invitations you were so kind as to favor our friends with, and which we considered as an obligation conferred upon ourselves. They were enclosed in letters, to which we have received no answers; but I conclude they have written to you. It unfortunately happens, that Mrs. Montague sees company at her own house every Saturday evening. How she may contrive to get over that I cannot tell. I am sure she will wish to be with you. I announced your intended Fête to her, and the idea of it seemed to give her great pleasure. Since you left town, she has sent two invitations to you, through me, to join her Saturday evening parties, which, I hope, at some future time you will find very pleasant things.

Now for ourselves. And now I am at a loss for words. My French and Latin Dictionaries will not assist me in this case, and I know not how to express the pleasure it would give us to attend your happy party, or the pain I feel at sending you a decisive refusal. But so you must permit it to be. My reasons why I say this, and which are as many as there are crocusses in this little garden here, I will make all known to you when we meet, till when I will allow you to call me selfish; but not even till then to think me so. Never mind your studies. I give you an untasked holyday, to last one fortnight from this day. On the day following I shall be at your door at eleven o'clock when I mean to take you in hand in right good earnest. All my time here is devoted to that end. I employ my time in writing Latin exercises during the whole of the morning; and my brother is so kind as to correct and growl over them in the evening.

You may remember I told you I knew nothing of latin-making, but I am working hard at it in order to make a scholar instead of a scholaress of you. I began french to please your fancy, and with a faint hope of being of some service to you, in that way, at some future period; but I find it also pleases myself hugely: for when I have worn out my brains with hard study, and what I call real learning, french seems quite a play to me in the evening. I have almost finished three of Racine's Tragedies since I have

been here, and find myself highly delighted with them, and likewise with myself for making them out so well as I do. I feel as proud of my miraculous powers as you did of yours, when you made out the french and italian in MISS WATSON'S 'ROSAMOND.'

I beg you will keep up the memory of me in Mrs. Arnold's mind, for I promise myself much pleasure in a future intimate friendship with her. Entre nous, is friendship with her good english? never mind. We, I mean you and I, when our education is finished, shall understand all these things.

Do not trouble yourself to answer this: it is imposing a task hard enough to make you read it through, now that you must have so many busy preparations in your head, in order to undergo the laborious toil of making so many friends happy, therefore I will leave off and spare you any farther trouble. Only I must just say I like your sister dearly, and I thank you for the pleasant evening we had last together. I say nothing to disparage Concerts, Balls, and Routs. But now, such a comfortable evening as that, or that when you were mending your Corset by the side of George Dyer. Are they not nice rememberable things?

Farewell, forgive me, and forget me not. I shall ever remain

Your most affectionate friend

M. LAMB.

Mrs. Bedford's, Church Street,
Stoke Newington

Monday. Time goes so oddly here I do not know the day of the month.

[Mary Lamb was not under care at Mrs. Bedford's; she and her brother were merely staying there for a while.

Mrs. Arnold was the wife of the lessee of the Lyceum Theatre, where Miss Kelly often played.

Two undated scraps may come here.]

351. CHARLES AND MARY LAMB TO SAMUEL JAMES ARNOLD

[No date.]

DEAR SIR,

We beg to convey our kindest acknowledgements to Mr. Arnold for the very pleasant privilege he has favoured us with. My yearly holidays end with next week, during which we shall

be mostly in the country, and afterwards avail ourselves fully of the privilege. Sincerely wishing you crowded houses, etc.,

We remain,

Yours truly,

CH. AND M. LAMB.

[Arnold was manager of the Lyceum, then known as the English Opera House. He was the brother of Mrs. William Ayrton.

Without dates I cannot say to what new play Lamb referred; but probably something with Miss Kelly in it.

The following postscript in another letter to Arnold (all that remains of it) seems to refer to the French lessons:]

P.S. Will it be asking too great a favour of you to call on Miss Kelly, and say from me, that my sister will not be able to see her for some time?

352. MARY LAMB TO MRS. VINCENT NOVELLO

Newington, Monday.
[*Spring of 1820.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Since we heard of your sad sorrow, you have been perpetually in our thoughts; therefore, you may well imagine how welcome your kind remembrance of it must be. I know not how enough to thank you for it. You bid me write a long letter; but my mind is so possessed with the idea that you must be occupied with one only thought, that all trivial matters seem impertinent. I have just been reading again Mr. Hunt's delicious Essay; which I am sure must have come so home to your hearts, I shall always love him for it. I feel that it is all that one can think, but which none but he could have done so prettily. May he lose the memory of his own babies in seeing them all grow old around him! Together with the recollection of your dear baby, the image of a little sister I once had comes as fresh into my mind as if I had seen her as lately. A little cap with white satin ribbon, grown yellow with long keeping, and a lock of light hair, were the only relics left of her. The sight of them always brought her pretty, fair face to my view, that to this day I seem to have a perfect recollection of her features. I long to see you, and I hope to do so on Tuesday or Wednesday in next week. Percy Street! I love to write the word; what comfortable ideas it brings with it!

We have been pleasing ourselves ever since we heard this piece of unexpected good news with the anticipation of frequent drop-in visits, and all the social comfort of what seems almost next-door neighbourhood.

Our solitary confinement has answered its purpose even better than I expected. It is so many years since I have been out of town in the Spring, that I scarcely knew of the existence of such a season. I see every day some new flower peeping out of the ground, and watch its growth; so that I have a sort of an intimate friendship with each. I know the effect of every change of weather upon them—have learned all their names, the duration of their lives, and the whole progress of their domestic economy. My landlady, a nice, active old soul that wants but one year of eighty, and her daughter, a rather aged young gentlewoman, are the only labourers in a pretty large garden; for it is a double house, and two long strips of ground are laid into one, well stored with fruit-trees, which will be in full blossom the week after I am gone, and flowers, as many as can be crammed in, of all sorts and kinds. But flowers are flowers still; and I must confess I would rather live in Russell Street all my life, and never set my foot but on the London pavement, than be doomed always to enjoy the silent pleasures I now do. We go to bed at ten o'clock. Late hours are life-shortening things; but I would rather run all risks, and sit every night—at some places I could name—wishing in vain at eleven o'clock for the entrance of the supper tray, than be always up and alive at eight o'clock breakfast, as I am here. We have a scheme to reconcile these things. We have an offer of a very low-rented lodging a mile nearer town than this. Our notion is, to divide our time, in alternate weeks, between quiet rest and dear London weariness. We give an answer to-morrow; but what that will be, at this present writing, I am unable to say. In the present state of our undecided opinion, a very heavy rain that is now falling may turn the scale. 'Dear rain, do go away,' and let us have a fine cheerful sunset to argue the matter fairly in. My brother walked seventeen miles yesterday before dinner. And notwithstanding his long walk to and from the office, we walk every evening; but I by no means perform in this way so well as I used to do. A twelve-mile walk one hot Sunday morning made my feet blister, and they are hardly well now.

Charles is not yet come home; but he bid me, with many thanks, to present his *love* to you and all yours, to all whom and to each individually, and to Mr. Novello in particular, I beg to add mine. With the sincerest wishes for the health and happiness of all, believe me, ever, dear Mary Sabilla, your most affectionate friend,

MARY ANN LAMB.

[Leigh Hunt's essay, 'Deaths of Little Children,' appeared in the *Indicator* for 5th April 1820; it was suggested by the same loss as that which prompted Mary Lamb's letter.

'Dear rain.' A line from Coleridge.]

353. CHARLES LAMB TO LEIGH HUNT

[No date: *End of April 1820.*]

DR. H.,

In Page 392 of the great book I send you is a story which strikes me would make an *Indicator*. Mark that scoundrel Charles 2ds speech to Lurton at the end & Lurton's glorious answer. You may as well read all Lurton's history, beginning bottom of page 387.

Yours

C. L.

Don't lose the book.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The "great book" was Sewell's *History of the Quakers*, and Leigh Hunt used the whole story of Lurting (not Lurton) in the *Indicator* for 3rd May 1820. Lurting was mate on board a Quaker vessel, which captured some Turks, but at a convenient opportunity set them free. The news preceded the ship homewards, and Charles II, being at Greenwich, came to the side and hearing the whole story from the mate, said: "You should have brought the Turks to me." But Lurting answered: "I thought it better for them to be in their own country."']

354. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

May 12 1820.

DEAR SIR,

We have arranged to be in the country Saturday and Sunday, having made an engagement to that effect. Pray let us see you on Thursday at Russell House.

With regrets and all proper feelings,

Yours truly,

C. L.

355. TO JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

May 16, 1820.

DEAR J. P. C.,

Many thanks for the 'Decameron': I have not such a gentleman's book in my collection: it was a great treat to me, and I got it just as I was wanting something of the sort. I take less pleasure in books than heretofore, but I like books about books. In the second volume, in particular, are treasures—your discoveries about 'Twelfth Night,' etc. What a Shakespearian essence that speech of Osrades for food!—Shakespeare is coarse to it—beginning 'Forbear and eat no more.' Osrades warms up to that, but does not set out ruffian-swaggerer. The character of the Ass with those three lines, worthy to be set in gilt vellum, and worn in frontlets by the noble beasts for ever:

> Thou would, perhaps, he should become thy foe,
> And to that end dost beat him many times:
> He cares not for himself, much less thy blow.

Cervantes, Sterne, and Coleridge, have said positively nothing for asses compared with this.

I write in haste; but p. 24, vol. i., the line you cannot appropriate is Gray's sonnet, specimenifyed by Wordsworth in first preface to L. B., as mixed of bad and good style: p. 143, 2nd vol., you will find last poem but one of the collection on Sidney's death in Spenser, the line,

> Scipio, Cæsar, Petrarch of our time.

This fixes it to be Raleigh's: I had guess'd it to be Daniel's. The last after it, 'Silence augmenteth rage,' I will be crucified if it be not Lord Brooke's. Hang you, and all meddling researchers, hereafter, that by raking into learned dust may find me out wrong in my conjecture!

Dear J. P. C., I shall take the first opportunity of personally thanking you for my entertainment. We are at Dalston for the most part, but I fully hope for an evening soon with you in Russell or Bouverie Street, to talk over old times and books. Remember *us* kindly to Mrs. J. P. C.

Yours very kindly, CHARLES LAMB.

I write in misery.

N.B. The best pen I could borrow at our butcher's: the ink, I verily believe, came out of the kennel.

[Collier's *Poetical Decameron*, in two volumes, was published in 1820: a series of imaginary conversations on curious and little-known books. His *Twelfth Night* discoveries will be found in the Eighth Conversation; Collier deduces the play from Barnaby Rich's *Apolonius and Silla*, found in his *Farewell to Military Profession*, 1581. He also describes Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde*, the forerunner of *As You Like It*, in which is the character Rosader, whom Lamb calls Osrades. His speech for food runs thus:

It hapned that day that *Gerismond*, the lawfull king of *France* banished by *Torismond*, who with a lustie crew of outlawes liued in that Forrest, that day in honour of his birth, made a feast to all his bolde yeomen, and frolickt it with store of wine and venison, sitting all at a long table vnder the shadow of Limon trees: to that place by chance fortune conducted *Rosader*, who seeing such a crew of braue men, hauing store of that for want of which hee and Adam perished, hee stept boldly to the boords end, and saluted the Company thus.—Whatsoeuer thou be that art maister of these lustie squires, I salute thee as graciously as a man in extreame distresse may: knowe that I and a fellow friend of mine, are here famished in the forrest for want of foode: perish we must, vnlesse relieued by thy fauours. Therefore if thou be a Gentleman, giue meate to men, and such as are euery way worthie of life: let the proudest Squire that sits at thy table rise and encounter with me in any honourable point of activitie whatsoeuer, and if he and thou proue me not a man, send mee away comfortlesse: if thou refuse this, as a niggard of thy cates, I will haue amongst you with my sword, for rather wil I die valiantly, then perish with so cowardly an extreame (Collier's *Poetical Decameron*, 174, Eighth Conversation).

Lamb compares with that the passage in *As You Like It*, II. vii. 88, beginning with Orlando's 'Forbear, and eat no more.'

The character of the ass is quoted by Collier from an old book, *The Noblenesse of the Asse*, 1595, in the Third Conversation:

Thou wouldst (perhaps) he should become thy foe,
And to that end doost beat him many times;
He cares not for himselfe, much lesse thy blowe.

Lamb wrote more fully of this passage in an article on the ass contributed to Hone's *Every-Day Book* in 1825 (see vol. i of my edition of the *Works*).

The line from Gray's sonnet on the death of Mr. Richard West was this:

And weep the more, because I weep in vain.

'Scipio, Cæsar,' etc. This line runs, in the epitaph on Sidney, beginning 'To praise thy life':

Scipio, Cicero, and Petrarch of our time!

It is generally supposed to be by Raleigh. The next poem, *Silence augmenteth Grief*, is attributed by Malone to Sir Edward Dyer, and by Hannah to Raleigh.

'Kennel.' Gutter, as we now say.]

356. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

DEAR MISS W.— [*Thursday, 25th May 1820.*]

I have volunteer'd to reply to your Note, because of a mistake I am desirous of rectifying on the spot—There can be none to whom the last Vol. of W. W. has come more welcome than to me.—I have traced the Duddon in thought, and with repetition, along the banks (alas!) of the sea—unpoetical name—it is always flowing & murmuring and dashing in my ears—The story of Dion is divine—the genius of Plato falling on him like moonlight the finest thing ever express'd. Then there is Elidure—& Kirkstone Pass—this last not new to me—& let me add one of the sweetest of all to me. The Longest Day—Loving all these as much as I can love poetry, new to me, what could I wish or desire or extravagantly desiderate in a new Vol. That I did not write to W. W. was simply that he was to come so soon, & that flattens Letters.—

I admired your averted looks on Saturday. You did not observe M. Burney's averted look also? You might have been supposed two Antipathies or quarrell'd lovers.—The fact was, M.B. had a *black eye* he was desirous of concealing, an artificial one I mean, not of Nature's making, but of Art's inflicting, for nobody quarrels with the black eyes the former gives—but it was curious to see you both asham'd of such Panegyrical objects as black eyes and white teeth have always been consider'd—

If you had staid but a moment longer, I was preparing a fine oriental compliment or comparison about 'a flock of sheep going up to be wash'd'—Are you quite aware of what your new visitors are made of? Parkinson, the Dentist, bought at the India House last week a huge lot of Sea Horse Teeth, at a rate far exceeding Ivory—so that my simile of sheep may be a little made out, if old Proteus's herds have been put in requisition—but seriously you do not feel any ravening salt sea horse propensities to bite—or long for sea naiads, salt pastures or coral? nor feel as if you were amphibious? or long to be floundering about among Seals & dolphins? I do not like these engraftings from other Elements.

We expect to be in Town about Wedny next & hope to see you

&c—you in particular, quite reconciled, Eating, Talking, Biting, &c. but not gnashing—gnashing of sea horse teeth must be horrible—it must roar

as the ocean roars.—GEBIR.

Mary is not here to see the stuff I write, else she would snatch the Pen out of my hand & conclude with some sober kind message—

Imagine what she would say, & take it from us both. We sincerely wish your Brother Better.

Yours both of us kindly

C. L. & M. L.

[Addressed] Miss Wordsworth, Rectory, Lambeth.

[The portion of this letter referring to new dentures is now printed for the first time.

Wordsworth's *The River Duddon: a Series of Sonnets*, with other poems, was published in 1820. Miss Wordsworth arrived in London before her brother, who was at Oxford on 30th May, and did not visit Lamb till 2nd June.

Gebir, by W. S. Landor.]

357. TO JOSEPH COTTLE

May 26, 1820.

MY DEAR SIR,

I am quite ashamed of not having acknowledg'd your second kind present earlier. But that unknown something, which was never yet discover'd, though so often speculated upon, which stands in the way of Lazy folks' answering letters, has presented its usual obstacle. It is not forgetfulness, nor disrespect, nor incivility, but terribly like all these bad things—

I have been in my time a great Epistolary Scribbler but the passion (& with it the facility) at length wears out, & it must be pumped up again by the heavy machinery of Duty, or Gratitude, when it should run free—

I have read your Poems with as much pleasure (I cannot say more) as I did the first Messiah, first I mean in order of reading, though the larger book was not quite unknown to me, having read portions of it at a friend's house—

Your Cambrian Poem is what I shall be tempted to repeat oftenest, as Human Poems take me in a mood more frequently congenial, than Divine. The Character of Llewellyn pleased me

more than any thing else perhaps, & then some of the Lyrical Pieces, which are fine varieties—

It was quite a mistake that I could dislike anything you should write against Ld Byron, for I have a thorough aversion to his character, and a very moderate admiration of his genius—he is great in so little a way—To be a Poet is to be The Man, the whole Man—not a petty portion of occasional low passion worked up into a permanent form of Humanity. Shakspeare has thrust such rubbishly feelings into a corner, the dark dusty heart of Don John in the much Ado. The fact is I have not yet seen your poem to him. It did not come with the rest, nor was I aware till your question, that it was out—I shall enquire & get it forth with—

Southey is in Town, whom I have seen slightly, Wordswth, expected, whom I hope to see much of—

Your neighbor Michl Castles, Morgan's friend, is also in Town, whom I shall trouble with this, if I do not get a Frank—I write with accelerated motion, for I have two or three bothering Clerks & Brokers about me, who always press in proportion as you seem to be doing something that is not business. I could exclaim a little profanely—but I think you do not like swearing —I conclude begging you to consider that I feel myself much obliged by your repeated kindness, & shall be most happy at any & all times to hear from you, Dear Sir. Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Cottle had apparently just sent Lamb a copy of his *Fall of Cambria*, although it had been published some years before. Perhaps Lamb had sent him his *Works*, and it was a return gift. Cottle's very serious *Expostulatory Epistle to Lord Byron* (who had cast ridicule upon his brother in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*) was issued in 1820, after the publication of *Don Juan* had begun.

Southey arrived in London on May Day 1820. Wordsworth followed early in June.]

358. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[*1st June 1820.*]

DEAR SIR,

We expect Wordsworth to-morrow evening. Will you look in? C. L.

Russell House, Thursday.

359. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[*27th June 1820.*]

DEAR SIR,

Wordsworth is with us this Even. Can you come? We leave Covent Garden on Thursday for some time.

C. L.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'On 27th June Crabb Robinson went to Lamb's, found the Wordsworths there, and having walked with them to Westminster Bridge, returned to Lamb's and sat an hour with Macready: "a very pleasing man, gentlemanly in his manners, and sensible and well-informed." Lamb had met Macready at Lloyd's a few months before.'

In June or early July Lamb was reviewing Keats's *Lamia* for the *New Times*, 21st July 1820. See my edition of the *Works*.]

360. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[P.M. *13th July 1820.*]

DEAR SIR,

I do not know whose fault it is we have not met so long. We are almost always out of town. You must come and beat up our quarters there, when we return from Cambridge. It is not in our power to accept your invitation. To-day we dine out; and set out for Cambridge on Saturday morning. Friday of course will be past in packing, &c., moreover we go from Dalston. We return from Cam. in 4 weeks, and will contrive an early meeting. Meantime believe us,

Sincerely yours,

C. L., &c.

Thursday.

[It was during this visit to Cambridge that Lamb wrote his *Elia* essay on 'Oxford in the Vacation.' More important in his life is the circumstance that it was then, probably, that he first met little Emma Isola, who was to become his adopted daughter. But more of this later.]

361. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[Dated by H. C. R., *1820*.
Actual date by external evidence: *21st July 1820*.]

DR. R.,

We are setting out, a coach full, in about a quart^r of hour, to see Audley End, Lord Braybrooks, and tomorrow I more than half expect my brother & a friend down for a few days, so that it is impossible to accept your kind offer, which we should have done most gladly. Pray return our warmest thanks to your brother for his invitation, which w^d have been very agreeable to have accepted, & the Traveller's Benison be with you.

Yours Truly

C. LAMB.

[Addressed] H. C. Robinson, Bury, Suffolk.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The time-table for this particular period runs thus:

Sat.	15th	July.	Lambs left Dalston for Cambridge.
Mon.	17th	,,	H. C. R. came from Bury to Cambridge on circuit.
Tues.	18th	,,	Mary Lamb surprised him by an evening call.
Wed.	19th	,,	Engaged in court all day.
Thurs.	20th	,,	Accompanied Charles and Mary on a walk behind the colleges. Left them to step in to a chaise and go off to Bury (about twenty-five miles east of Cambridge, a main road), found his brother alone. Probably brother suggested inviting Lambs over for week end, and H. C. R. wrote at once, that evening, so that on
Fri.	21st	,,	Lamb received the invitation, and replied at once, as above. H. C. R. spent the week-end at Bury, but on
Mon.	24th	,,	He was off to Norwich, stayed there till 29th, when he travelled to London, changing at Bury for an inside place, and travelling all night, reached his chambers on morning of Sunday. And on Tuesday, 1st August, he started off for a tour on the Continent. Hence Lamb's "Traveller's Benison," and hence the deduction that 21st July was the only date on which Lamb's letter could have been written.']

362. TO BARRON FIELD

London, *16 Aug.*, *1820*.

DEAR FIELD,

Captain Ogilvie, who conveys this note to you, and is now paying for the first time a visit to your remote shores, is the

brother of a Gentleman intimately connected with the family of the *Whites*, I mean of Bishopsgate Street—and you will much oblige them and myself by any service or civilities you can shew him.

I do not mean this for an answer to your warm-hearted Epistle, which demands and shall have a much fuller return. We received your Australian First Fruits, of which I shall say nothing here, but refer you to **** of the *Examiner*, who speaks our mind on all public subjects. I can only assure you that both Coleridge and Wordsworth, and also C. Lloyd, who has lately reappeared in the poetical horizon, were hugely taken with your Kangaroo.

When do you come back full of riches and renown, with the regrets of all the honest, and all the other part of the colony? Mary swears she shall live to see it.

Pray are you King's or Queen's men in Sidney? Or have thieves no politics? Mem., don't let this lie about your room for your bed sweeper or Major Domo to see, he mayn't like this last paragraph.

This is a dull and lifeless scroll. You shall have soon a tissue of truth and fiction impossible to be extricated, the interlacings shall be so delicate, the partitions perfectly invisible, it shall puzzle you till you return, & [then] I will not explain it. Till then a . . . adieu, with kind remᵇʳᶜᵉˢ. of us both to you & . . . [*Signature and a few words torn off.*]

[Barron Field, who was still in New South Wales, had printed his poems under the title *First-Fruits of Australian Poetry*, and Lamb had reviewed them in the *Examiner* for 16th January 1820, over his usual signature in that paper, ****. 'The Kangaroo' is quoted in that review (see my edition of Lamb's *Works*).

Captain Ogilvie was the brother of a clerk at the India House, who gave Mr. Joseph H. Twichell some reminiscences of Lamb, which were printed in *Scribner's Magazine*.

'King's or Queen's men.' Supporters of George IV or Caroline of Brunswick. Lamb was very strongly in favour of the queen, as his *Champion* epigrams show (again see my edition).

'Thieves.' In his review Lamb calls Australia 'inauspicious unliterary Thiefland.'

'You shall soon see.' Lamb's first reference to the *Elia* essays, alluding here to 'The South-Sea House.']

363. TO JOHN SCOTT

[Dated at end: *Thursday, 24th August 1820.*]

Dr SIR,

I sent you yesterday by the 2d post 2 small copies of verses directd by mistake to No. 8 York St. if you have *not* recd them, pray favor me with a line. From your not writing, I shall conclude you have got them.

Yours respfly

C. LAMB.

Thursday 24 Aug. 20.

[The poems were the sonnet to Barry Cornwall and the lines to R. S. Knowles, one signed with four stars and one signed C. Lamb, which appeared in the *London Magazine* for September. Both will be found in vol. iv of my edition of Lamb's *Works*. The 'R.' of R. S. Knowles was a blunder for 'James.'

Scott was now editor of the *London Magazine*, the August number of which contained the first of the essays of Elia, that on the South Sea House.]

364. TO WILLIAM HAZLITT

[No date: *? 2nd September 1820.*]

DEAR H.,

Lest you shd come to-morrow, I write to say that Mary is ill again. The last thing she read was the 'Thursday Nights,' which seem'd to give her unmix'd delight, & she was sorry for what she said to you that night. The Article is a treasure to us for ever. Stoddart sent over the magaze to know if it were yours, and says it is better than Hogarth's 'Mod. Midn. Conversation,' with several other most kind mentions of it: he signs his note *An old Mitre Courtian.*

C. LAMB.

Saturday.

[Hazlitt's *Table Talk* III. 'On the Conversation of Authors' appeared in the *London Magazine* for September 1820. It contains an account of Lamb's Thursday parties.]

365. TO JOHN SCOTT

[P.M. *18th September 1820.*]

DEAR SIR,

You ask'd for Knowles's address. I do not know it, but believe he lives at Glasgow. I should think a letter addressed to

him at the theatre there (where his play was first acted) would find him. My friend, T. N. Talfourd, of the Inner Temple, writes much and well. He wrote in the Retrospective the article on Davies & Cibber, and others & some masterly things on the Greek Tragedians in Fenner's dropt Encyclopaedia. He is ambitious of doing something for the Lond. Mag. Is your Critic Department full? I suspect overfull. But if not will you let me tell him so? Do not suspect me of wanting to thrust a writer upon you, particularly as I suspect him to have written an over puffing acct of your hble Serv. in the New Monthly.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[James Sheridan Knowles (1784–1862), the dramatist, who became a friend of Lamb, was at that time a schoolmaster. His tragedy, *Caius Gracchus*, was produced at Covent Garden on 17th May 1820, with Macready in the title-role. The 'dropt Encyclopædia' was the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*.]

366. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

[No date: *? Autumn 1820.*]

DEAR C.,

Why will you make your visits, which should give pleasure, matter of regret to your friends? You never come but you take away some folio that is part of my existence. With a great deal of difficulty I was made to comprehend the extent of my loss. My maid Becky brought me a dirty bit of paper, which contained her description of some book which Mr. Coleridge had taken away. It was 'Luster's Tables,' which, for some time, I could not make out. 'What! has he carried away any of the *tables*, Becky?' 'No, it wasn't any tables, but it was a book that he called Luster's Tables.' I was obliged to search personally among my shelves, and a huge fissure suddenly disclosed to me the true nature of the damage I had sustained. That book, C., you should not have taken away, for it is not mine; it is the property of a friend, who does not know its value, nor indeed have I been very sedulous in explaining to him the estimate of it; but was rather contented in giving a sort of corroboration to a hint that he let fall, as to its being suspected to be not genuine, so that in

all probability it would have fallen to me as a deodand; not but I am as sure it is Luther's as I am sure that Jack Bunyan wrote the 'Pilgrim's Progress;' but it was not for me to pronounce upon the validity of testimony that had been disputed by learneder clerks than I. So I quietly let it occupy the place it had usurped upon my shelves, and should never have thought of issuing an ejectment against it; for why should I be so bigoted as to allow rites of hospitality to none but my own books, children, &c.?—a species of egotism I abhor from my heart. No; let 'em all snug together, Hebrews and Proselytes of the gate; no selfish partiality of mine shall make distinction between them; I charge no warehouse-room for my friends' commodities; they are welcome to come and stay as long as they like, without paying rent. I have several such strangers that I treat with more than Arabian courtesy; there's a copy of More's fine poem, which is none of mine; but I cherish it as my own; I am none of those churlish landlords that advertise the goods to be taken away in ten days' time, or then to be sold to pay expenses. So you see I had no right to lend you that book; I may lend you my own books, because it is at my own hazard, but it is not honest to hazard a friend's property; I always make that distinction. I hope you will bring it with you, or send it by Hartley; or he can bring that, and you the 'Polemical Discourses,' and come and eat some atoning mutton with us one of these days shortly. We are engaged two or three Sundays deep, but always dine at home on week-days at half-past four. So come all four —men and books I mean— my third shelf (northern compartment) from the top has two devilish gaps, where you have knocked out its two eye-teeth.

Your wronged friend, C. LAMB.

[This letter is usually dated 1824, but I think it was written earlier. For one reason, Hartley Coleridge was not in London in that year, and for another, there are several phrases in the *Elia* essay 'The Two Races of Men' (printed in the *London Magazine*, December 1820) that are so similar to some in this letter that I imagine the letter to have suggested the subject of the essay, the composition of which immediately followed it. Thus, in the essay we read:

> That foul gap in the bottom shelf facing you, like a great eye-tooth knocked out—(you are now with me in my little back study in Bloomsbury, reader!) ——with the huge Switzer-like tomes on each side (like the Guildhall giants, in their reformed posture, guardant of nothing) once held the tallest of my folios, *Opera Bonaventuræ*, choice and massy divinity, to which its two

supporters (school divinity also, but of a lesser calibre,—Bellarmine, and Holy Thomas), showed but as dwarfs,—itself an Ascapart!—*that* Comberbatch abstracted upon the faith of a theory he holds, which is more easy, I confess, for me to suffer by than to refute, namely, that 'the title to property in a book (my Bonaventure, for instance) is in exact ratio to the claimant's powers of understanding and appreciating the same.' Should he go on acting upon this theory, which of our shelves is safe?

'Luster's Tables.' Luther's *Table Talk*. This book, once in the possession of Edward White, passed into the library of Mr. Thomas J. Wise.

'More's fine poem.' The *Psychozoia Platonica*, 1642, of Henry More, the Platonist. Lamb seems to have returned the book, for it was not among his books that he left. Luther's *Table Talk* seems also to have been given up.

This letter contains the first mention of Becky, the Lambs' tyrannical servant, who remained with them until 1829. For a minute analysis of the crotchety character of Becky, P. G. Patmore's *My Friends and Acquaintances*, 1854, should be consulted. On 5th December 1826 Patmore spent the evening at the Lambs'.]

367. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[Dated at end: *17th November 1820.*]

DEAR SIR,

We have got over our first Engagem^t^. & shall have great pleasure in accompanying the Wordsw^ths^. to Gloucester Place tomorrow

Yours truly,

C. Lamb.

Friday 17 Nov. 1820.

368. TO BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

[P.M. *21st November 1820.*]

Can you meet W. W. at our house this Evening?

C. L.

[This is the first letter to Bryan Waller Procter (1787–1874), the poet, better known as 'Barry Cornwall,' who was connected editorially with the *London Magazine*, and was to be one of Lamb's biographers. Lamb, who rarely got his name right, began very badly, for this was addressed to 'R. Proctor, Esq.']

369. TO R. BALDWIN

E. I. H. *2 Jan. 1821.*

DEAR SIR,

I received your second dft for £20;—and feel myself your debtor for the handsome manner in which you speak of, as well as

remunerate, my little labours. In shorter words, Elia is no less gratified than C. L.—I hope we shall continue our good understanding, and the London flourish! I am sorry I cannot do more in quantity for it, but I am wretchedly straitened for time that I can call my own. Elia's complaint of abridged holydays was no fiction, but an odious truth.—I beg to return the good wishes of the season, and assure you that I consider myself your

obliged Servt

C. LAMB.

Our last No. was strong. Edgeworth Benson is a great accession.

[Baldwin, Cradock, & Joy were the publishers of the *London Magazine*. In the December number Lamb has, under 'The Lion's Head,' an apology to G. D. for having unwillingly hurt his feelings in the essay on 'Oxford in the Vacation' in the October number. His *Elia* essay in December was 'The Two Races of Men.' His *Elia* contribution for January 1821 was 'New Year's Eve.' In the same number Edgeworth Benson, Gentleman, began a series of 'Travels and Opinions.']

370. TO BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

[P.M. *8th January 1821*.]

You haven't three Orders to bestow upon us on Tuesday, have you? it will save us a guinea, and double-sweeten Mirandula. By the bye, is it the famous Picus?

Yours to applaud,

C. L.

Gt. Russell St.

Sunday
Some day of the month.

[This also was addressed to 'R. Proctor, Esq.'

Procter's play *Mirandula*, produced at Covent Garden, had a sixteen nights' run, with Charles Kemble as the great attraction.

'Picus.' Lamb had the famous Italian youthful scholar and disputant, Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) much in mind, for in the *Elia* essay on Christ's Hospital, which had been published in the *London Magazine* in the previous November, he had compared Coleridge to him. Procter's play was not concerned with him.]

371. TO DOROTHY WORDSWORTH

[P.M. *8th January 1821.*]

Mary perfectly approves of the appropriatn of the *feathers*, and wishes them Peacocks for your fair niece's sake!

DEAR MISS WORDSWORTH,

I had just written the above endearing words when Monkhouse tapped me on the shoulder with an invitation to cold goose pye, which I was not Bird of that sort enough to decline. Mrs. M. I am most happy to say is better. Mary has been tormented with a Rheumatism, which is leaving her. I am suffering from the festivities of the season. I wonder how my misused carcase holds it out. I have play'd the experimental philosopher on it, that's certain. Willy shall be welcome to a mince pye, and a bout at Commerce, whenever he comes. He was in our eye. I am glad you liked my new year's speculations. Everybody likes them, except the Author of the Pleasures of Hope. Disappointment attend him! How I like to be liked, and *what I do* to be liked! They flatter me in magazines, newspapers, and all the minor reviews. The Quarterlies hold aloof. But they must come into it in time, or their leaves be waste paper. Salute Trinity Library in my name. Two special things are worth seeing at Cambridge, a portrait of Cromwell at Sidney, and a better of Dr. Harvey (who found out that blood was red) at Dr. Davy's. You should see them.

Coleridge is pretty well, I have not seen him, but hear often of him from Alsop, who sends me hares and pheasants twice a week. I can hardly take so fast as he gives. I have almost forgotten Butcher's meat, as Plebeian. Are you not glad the Cold is gone? I find winters not so agreeable as they used to be, when 'winter bleak had charms for me.' I cannot conjure up a kind similitude for those snowy flakes—Let them keep to Twelfth Cakes.

Mrs. Paris, our Cambridge friend, has been in Town. You do not know the Watfords? in Trumpington Street—they are capital people.

Ask any body you meet, who is the biggest woman in Cambridge —and I'll hold you a wager they'll say Mrs. Smith.

She broke down two benches in Trinity Gardens, one on the confines of St. John's, which occasioned a litigation between the societies as to repairing it. In warm weather she retires into an ice-cellar (literally!) and dates the returns of the years from a hot Thursday some 20 years back. She sits in a room with opposite doors and windows, to let in a thorough draught, which gives her slenderer friends toothaches. She is to be seen in the market every morning at 10, cheapening fowls, which I observe the Cambridge Poulterers are not sufficiently careful to stump.

Having now answered most of the points containd in your Letter, let me end with assuring you of our very best kindness, and excuse Mary from not handling the Pen on this occasion, especially as it has fallen into so much better hands! Will Dr. W. accept of my respects at the end of a foolish Letter.

C. L.

[Miss Wordsworth was visiting her brother, Christopher Wordsworth, the Master of Trinity.

Willy was William Wordsworth, jun.

Lamb's New Year speculations were contained in his *Elia* essay 'New Year's Eve,' in the *London Magazine* for January 1821. There is no evidence that Campbell disapproved of the essay. Canon Ainger suggests that Lamb may have thus alluded playfully to the pessimism of his remarks, so opposed to the pleasures of hope. When the *Quarterly* did 'come in,' in 1823, it was with cold words, as we shall see.

'Trinity Library.' It is here that are preserved those MSS. of Milton, which Lamb in his essay 'Oxford in the Vacation,' in the *London Magazine* for October 1820, says he regrets to have seen.

'Cromwell at Sidney.' See Mary Lamb's letter to Miss Hutchinson, 20th August 1815.

'Harvey . . . at Dr. Davy's.' Dr Martin Davy, Master of Caius.

'Winter bleak had charms for me.' I could not find this for my previous edition of the *Letters*. It is from Burns's *Epistle to William Simpson*, stanza 13.

Mrs. Paris was a sister of William Ayrton and the mother of John Ayrton Paris, the physician. It was at her house at Cambridge that the Lambs saw Emma Isola, whom we are soon to meet.

'Mrs. Smith.' Lamb worked up this portion of his letter into the little humorous sketch, 'The Gentle Giantess,' printed in the *London Magazine* for December, 1822 (see vol. i of my edition of the *Works*), wherein Mrs. Smith of Cambridge becomes the Widow Blacket of Oxford.

'Dr. W.' Dr. Christopher Wordsworth.]

372. JOINT LETTER BY EMMA ISOLA AND CHARLES LAMB TO MISS HUMPHREYS

January 9th 1821.

MY DEAR AUNT,

I received your letter last night and am very sorry to hear Charles will not suit Mrs. Garratt. I arrived quite safe and Miss Lamb was at the Inn waiting for me. The first night I came we went out to spend the evening. The second night Mr. Lamb took me to see the wild beasts at Exeter Change. Saturday night being twelfth night I went to a party and did not return till four in the morning. Yesterday Miss Lamb took me to the theatre at Covent Garden. I cannot tell you how much I liked it. I was so delighted.

Here Emma ends and I begin.

Emma is a very naughty girl, and has broken three cups, one plate and a slop-bason with mere giddiness. She is looking over me, which is impertinent. But if you can spare her longer than her holidays, we shall be happy to keep her, in hopes of her amendment. She came home at 5 o'clock in the morning with a strange gentleman on Twelfth Night. What does Emma mean by saying that I do not suit Mrs. Garratt? I think the old gentlewoman & I should agree very well together. My love to her—. Becky (you remember our maid Becky) has married an oilman, which was a very dirty trick.

Will you, dear Miss Humph. permit Emma to stay a week or so beyond her holidays. She is studying algebra & the languages. I teach her *dancing*.

With love to Mrs. Paris, Mrs. Smith, and those agreeable people in Trumpington Street that shall be nameless, I conclude,

Yours & theirs truly,

C. LAMB.

Tuesday 9 Jan. 21.

[This is a particularly interesting letter, not only for its fun, but because it contains our first intimation of a new influence in Lamb's life, Emma Isola, whom later he and his sister adopted. Emma was one of the daughters of Charles Isola, of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, Esquire Bedell of the University, son of Agostino Isola, also of Cambridge, the Italian critic and teacher of Italian among whose pupils had been Wordsworth, and who had assisted

Thomas Gray when he was Professor of History and Modern Languages. Emma, who had just become an orphan, was, in 1821, a child in her early teens. Miss Humphreys was her aunt.

I cannot trace the real Charles who would not suit Mrs. Garratt. There may have been a Charles Isola junior.

The play which Emma saw with Miss Lamb was *The Antiquary*, followed by a new grand comic pantomime, called 'Harlequin and Friar Bacon: or The Brazen Head.']

373. CHARLES LAMB TO MRS. WILLIAM AYRTON

[Dated at end: *23rd January 1821.*]

DEAR MRS. AYRTON,

My sister desires me, as being a more expert penman than herself, to say that she saw Mrs. Paris yesterday, and that she is very much out of spirits, and has expressed a great wish to see your son William, and Fanny——

I like to write that word *Fanny*. I do not know but it was one reason of taking upon me this pleasing task——

Moreover that if the said William and Frances will go and sit an hour with her at any time, she will engage that no one else shall see them but herself, and the servant who opens the door, she being confined to her private room. I trust you and the Juveniles will comply with this reasonable request.

& am
Dear Mrs. Ayrton
your's and yours'
Truly

C. LAMB.

[Although a little premature, I might say here that in the copy of *Elia* which Lamb gave to Mrs. Ayrton, probably in 1823, is written:]

Mrs. Ayrton with C. Lamb's kind regards.
N.B. Don't show this to Mr. A.
Men are so jealous.
At all events it is wise to be prudent, &c.

374. TO MISS HUMPHREYS

London *27 Jan^{y}. 1821.*

DEAR MADAM,

Carriages to Cambridge are in such request, owing to the Installation, that we have found it impossible to procure a

conveyance for Emma before Wednesday, on which day between the hours of 3 and 4 in the afternoon you will see your little friend, with her bloom somewhat impaired by late hours and dissipation, but her gait, gesture, and general manners (I flatter myself) considerably improved by——*somebody that shall be nameless.* My sister joins me in love to all true Trumpingtonians, not specifying any, to avoid *envy;* and begs me to assure you that Emma has been a very good girl, which, with certain limitations, I must myself subscribe to. I wish I could cure her of making dog's ears in books, and pinching them on poor Pompey, who, for one, I dare say, will heartily rejoyce at her departure.

Dear Madam,

Yours truly

foolish C. L.

[Addressed] Miss Humphreys, with Mrs. Paris, Trumpington Street, Cambridge.

[Franked by J. Rickman.

Pompey was not, I think, Lamb's own dog. Probably his landlord, Owen's.]

375. TO JOHN SCOTT

[No date or P.M., but probably the first week of *February 1821.*]

DEAR SIR,

I cannot let this packet go without acknowledging your attention in transmitting me a copy of your Statement—I have read both carefully, and most heartily acquiesce in the whole conduct of the affair on OUR PART.

Are you sure it was *L*—who came up from Edinbro after all—? might it not be the Etterick Herdsman, come to impose upon you and take pot luck—or shot luck—for his friend?—Should you have known his person? they are such a nest of impostures—

Vivat Lond. Mag cum Editore

Scriptoribusque

Yours truly

C. L.

[This letter bears upon the tragic quarrel between John Scott and John Gibson Lockhart, following Scott's articles in the *London Magazine* attacking *Blackwood's Magazine,* which led to a duel between Scott and Lockhart's friend, Jonathan Henry Christie, at Chalk Farm on 16th February 1821, in which Scott was fatally injured. P. G. Patmore was Scott's second. Both Scott and

Lockhart had issued statements of their case. Scott's first statement was written on 18th January, and Lockhart then printed his own defence and Christie went to John Stoddart of the *New Times* and got him to publish it. In the February number of the *London Magazine* the whole matter was presented. In the March number there was merely a record of Scott's death.

The 'Etterick Herdsman,' more commonly known as the Ettrick Shepherd, was James Hogg, also one of the *London Magazine's* contributors.

Lamb's packet probably was the copy for his next *Elia* essay, 'A Chapter on Ears.']

376. TO THOMAS NOON TALFOURD

[No date: possibly *Sunday, February 1821*, or *March*.]

Come & dine with us today at 4 on Miss K's Birds, *come a little before 4*. We dine punctually at that time.

Yours ever

C. L.

If I ever produce a MS. sonnet again I'll be d——d.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Very difficult to date accurately. It must have been in the Russell Street time; probably a Sunday, since they dined sharp at 4. It was winter, because of the "Birds." Mary was well, since he says "us." And the MS. sonnet may have been *Who First Invented Work*, which was in *London Magazine* for April. Lamb may have read it at one of his "evenings" at which T. had been present, and perhaps raised a storm of argument on the subject.'

On 7th March Lamb met Sir Walter Scott at Haydon's studio.

Another undated scrap may come here:]

377. TO THOMAS NOON TALFOURD

DR. T.,

Come this Eveng. I expect Liston after the Play.

C. L.

Satury.

Can we have the Surry Tickets on Monday?

378. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

[P.M.? *14th March 1821*.]

DEAR A.,

We are at home this Evening. Excuse forms from,

Your uninformed

C. L.

I think Madame Noblet the least graceful dancer I ever *did not see*.

379. TO MRS. WILLIAM AYRTON

[Dated at end: *15th March 1821*, and written in a very tiny hand.]

DEAR MADAM,

We are out of town of necessity till Wednesday next, when we hope to see one of you at least to a rubber. On some future Saturday we shall most gladly accept your kind offer. When I read your delicate little note, I am ashamed of my great staring letters.

Yours most truly

CHARLES LAMB.

Dalston near Hackney.

380. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

30 March, 1821.

MY DEAR SIR,

If you can come next Sunday we shall be equally glad to see you, but do not trust to any of Martin's appointments, except on business, in future. He is notoriously faithless in that point, and we did wrong not to have warned you. Leg of Lamb, as before; hot at 4. And the heart of Lamb ever.

Yours truly, C. L.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'On Saturday, 14th April 1821, Sarah Burney was married to John Thomas Payne, at St. Margaret's, Westminster, by the Rev. Charles Parr Burney.'

This was 'The Wedding' described by 'Elia' four years later.]

381. TO LEIGH HUNT

Indifferent Wednesday [*18th April*], *1821.*

DEAR HUNT,

There was a sort of side talk at Mr. Novello's about our spending *Good Friday* at Hampstead, but my sister has got so bad a cold, and we both want rest so much, that you shall excuse our putting off the visit some little time longer. Perhaps, after all, you know nothing of it.—Believe me, yours truly, C. LAMB.

[Novello's musical evenings are mentioned by Lamb in his 'Chapter on Ears.']

382. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

May 1st [*1821*],
Mr. Gilman's, Highgate.

DR. C.

I will not fail you on Friday by six, and Mary, perhaps, earlier. I very much wish to meet 'Master Mathew,' and am much obliged to the G——s for the opportunity. Our kind respects to them always.— ELIA.

Extract from a MS. note of S. T. C. in my Beaumont and Fletcher, dated April 17th 1807.

'*Midnight.*

'God bless you, dear Charles Lamb, I am dying; I feel I have not many weeks left.'

[Master Mathew is in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*, but here means Charles Mathews the actor.

Lamb's 'Beaumont and Fletcher' is in the British Museum. The note quoted by Lamb is not there, or perhaps it is one that has been crossed out. This still remains: 'N.B. I shall not be long here, Charles! I gone, you will not mind my having spoiled a book in order to leave a Relic. S. T. C., Oct. 1811.'

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'In Lamb's copy of Donne's poems Coleridge had written: "I shall die soon, my dear Charles Lamb, and then you will not be vexed that I have bescribbled your book. S. T. C. 2 May 1811."']

383. TO JAMES GILLMAN

[Dated at end: *2nd May 1821*.]

DEAR SIR,

You dine so late on Friday, it will be impossible for us to go home by the eight o'clock stage. Will you oblige us by securing us beds at some house from which a stage goes to the Bank in the morning? I would write to Coleridge, but cannot think of troubling a dying man with such a request.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

If the beds in the town are all engaged, in consequence of Mr. Mathews's appearance, a hackney-coach will serve.

Wednesy. 2 May '21.

We shall neither of us come much before the time.

[The dinner occurred on 4th May, and Mrs. Mathews (who was half-sister

of Fanny Kelly) described the evening in her *Memoirs* of her husband, 1839. Her account of Lamb is interesting:

> Mr. Lamb's first approach was not prepossessing. His figure was small and mean; and no man certainly was ever less beholden to his tailor. His 'bran' new *suit* of black cloth (in which he affected several times during the day to take great pride, and to cherish as a novelty that he had long looked for and wanted) was drolly contrasted with his very rusty silk stockings, shown from his knees, and his much too large *thick* shoes, without polish. His shirt rejoiced in a wide ill-plaited frill, and his very small, tight, white neckcloth was hemmed to a fine point at the ends that formed part of the little bow. His hair was black and sleek, but not formal, and his face the gravest I ever saw, but indicating great intellect, and resembling very much the portraits of King Charles I. Mr. Coleridge was very anxious about his *pet* Lamb's first impression upon my husband, which I believe his friend saw; and guessing that he had been extolled, he mischievously resolved to thwart his panegyrist, disappoint the strangers, and altogether to upset the suspected plan of showing him off.

The Mathewses were then living at Ivy Cottage, only a short distance from the Grove, Highgate, where the famous Mathews collection of pictures was to be seen of which Lamb subsequently wrote in the *London Magazine*. They are now in the Garrick Club.]

384. TO R. BALDWIN

DEAR SIR, [Dated at end: *7th May 1821.*]

Keep a little room open for me till the *18th* if you can. I should be sorry to see a No. quite ELIA-less—and hope not [to] see such a one for some time yet to come.—I trust the London does not go retrograde.—I must apologise for the small quantity I contribute, but I shall hold out the longer for it.

Yours & the Magazines
devoted Scr——

C. LAMB.

In future, please to give
me to the *18th* of each
month—not an hour longer—

[In the June number Lamb was represented by the *Elia* essay 'My Relations.']

385. TO R. BALDWIN OR JOHN TAYLOR

DEAR SIR, [Dated at end: *22nd May 1821.*]

I shall not be at the India House for three or four weeks, it being my Vacation Time. May I trouble you to send your

June Number to 20 Russell St Covent Garden, if it be equally convenient; or any other communication you may have to make.

Your oblig[e]d Ser

C Lamb.

Tuesday 22 May 1821.

386. TO BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

DEAR SIR, [No date: *? May 1821.*]

The *Wits* (as Clare calls us) assemble at my Cell (20 Russell St. Cov.-Gar.) this evening at ¼ before 7. Cold meat at 9. Puns at—a little after. Mr. Cary wants to see you, to scold you. I hope you will not fail.

Yours &c. &c. &c.

C. LAMB.

Thursday.

I am sorry the London Magazine is going to be given up.

[The *London Magazine* had four periods. From January 1820 to June 1821, when it was Baldwin, Cradock, & Joy's. From July 1821 to the end of 1824, when it was Taylor & Hessey's, at a shilling. From January 1825 to August of that year, when it was Taylor & Hessey's, at half a crown; and from September 1825 to the end, when it was Henry Southern's, and was published by Hunt & Clarke.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'This letter is both puzzling and important. It was given by Procter to J. T. Fields, and is facsimiled in *A Shelf of Old Books*. The postmark is faintly visible, and by the aid of a mirror may be construed into 10th May, which was a Thursday. Now from Mr. R. W. King I learn that on *11th* May 1821 Taylor wrote to Clare: "We have purchased the *London Magazine* from Messrs. Baldwin & Co." So that Lamb would in a very few days after 10th May have heard the news of the purchase. This is all in favour of the date. But it is the only indication that we have, that Lamb knew Cary as early as 1821, and in a letter from T. G. Wainewright (Janus Weathercock) to Cary, dated 24th May *1822*, inviting Cary to dinner to meet Lamb, Taylor & Hessey, A. Cunningham, Clare, and the *Ode to Dr. Kitchener* (Hood) he goes on: "From Mr. Taylor I learn that the first of these is as yet *personally* unacquainted with you. Overlook then the mental distance between the English Dante and the Jack-puddin of the *L. M.*, and allow me to become the much-honoured instrument of your introduction." I think though that Taylor was mistaken in what he told W., and that Lamb had got to know Cary through S. T. C., who had met Cary at Littlehampton in 1817.'

'As Clare calls us.' John Clare (1793–1864), the Northamptonshire peasant poet whom Mr. Blunden and Mr. J. W. Tibble have so ably edited, and whom the *London Magazine* introduced to fame. It is possible that Lamb had not yet

met Clare, who had only spent one hectic week in London, in 1820—but was speaking from hearsay.

I append another note to Procter, undated:]

387. TO BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

DEAR PROCTOR

Can you come, to us tomorrow evening, say *six* or *seven*,

C. LAMB.

Tuesday.

[Addressed] J. Proctor, Esq.

[I place here a note to Allsop, as Procter is mentioned in it as a guest.]

388. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

DR. A.

I expect Proctor and Wainwright (Janus W.) this evening; will you come? I suppose it is but a compt to ask Mrs. Alsop; but it is none to say that we should be most glad to see her. Yours ever. How vexed I am at your Dalston expeditn. C. L.

Tuesday.

[Thomas Griffiths Wainewright (1794–1852) was an active colleague of Lamb's on the *London Magazine* under various signatures, chief of which was 'Janus Weathercock.' Lamb liked him ('Give me men as they ought not to be'), but he ended his life as a convict under suspicion of being a poisoner. Nothing indeed is absolutely known to his discredit, and the offence for which he was condemned was forging some signatures to get at money of his own.]

389. TO ALLAN CUNNINGHAM

DEAR SIR, [*1821.*]

Our friends of the Lond. M. meet at 20 Russell St., Covent Garden, this evening at a quarter before 7. I shall be disappointed if you are not among them.

Yours, with perfect sympathy,

C. LAMB.

Thursday.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'This note is inserted in a copy of *Elia* which belonged to Allan Cunningham: "Allan Cunningham, Esq., with Elia's best respects." Cunningham being a Scot, the expression "with perfect sympathy" would seem to point to this note having been written *after* the appearance of "Imperfect Sympathies" in the August No. But I feel convinced that it was written on the same day as the invitation to Procter, the wording is so similar. The

question of Imperfect Sympathies had very likely been discussed between Lamb and his friends, and had given him the idea for his essay.'

Allan Cunningham (1784–1842) in addition to being an active literary journeyman, had a permanent post as secretary and factotum to Chantrey the sculptor.]

390. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[P.M. *15th May 1821.*]

DR. SIR,

We are at home this (Wednesday) evening. Come; & do not *go* so abruptly as you vanished at Highgate.

Yours ever

C. L.

391. TO JOHN TAYLOR

[P.M. *8th June 1821.*]

DEAR SIR,

I am extremely sorry to be obliged to decline the article proposed, particularly as I should have been flattered with a Plate accompanying it. In the first place, Mid-summer day is not a topic I could make any thing of, I am so pure a Cockney, and little read besides in May games and antiquities; and in the second, I am here at Margate, spoiling my holydays with a Review I have undertaken for a friend, which I shall barely get through before my return, for that sort of work is a hard task to me. If you will excuse the shortness of my first contribution—and I *know* I can promise nothing more for July—I will endeavor a longer article for *our next*. Will you permit me to say, that I think Leigh Hunt would do the article you propose in a masterly manner, if he has not out-writ himself already upon the subject. I do not return the proof—to save postage—because it is correct, with *one exception*. In the stanza from Wordsworth, you have changed DAY into AIR for rhymesake. DAY is the right reading, and I *implore you to restore it*.

The other passage, which you have queried, is to my ear correct. Pray let it stand.

Dr Sr

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

On second consideration
I do enclose the Proof.

[This is the first letter to John Taylor, the new proprietor, with J. A. Hessey, of the *London Magazine*. Taylor acted as editor, with Thomas Hood, son of an old family friend, as one of his assistants: hence the many puns thereafter in the 'Lion's Head' pages. John Taylor (1781–1864) was the first critic publicly to identify 'Junius' with Sir Philip Francis. Later he became an authority on questions of currency.

Lamb seems to have been asked to write about Midsummer Day.

It was while the Lambs were at Margate that Mr. and Mrs. Cowden Clarke went over from Ramsgate to see them. 'It seems,' wrote Mrs. Clarke, 'as if it were but yesterday that I noted his eager way of telling me about an extraordinarily large whale that had been captured there, of its having created lively interest in the place, of its having been conveyed away in a strong cart, on which it lay a huge mass of colossal height; when he added with one of his sudden droll penetrating glances: "The eye has just gone past our window."'

We do not know for certain what review Lamb was writing, but I assume it to be one of the first series of Hazlitt's *Table Talk*. Although completed, it was, so far as I can discover, never printed. From the original, which is in the possession of Mr. Owen D. Young, of New York, I quote this particularly interesting section, where Lamb reveals a poignantly intimate understanding of Hazlitt's difficult character, and writes not perhaps without a little resentment:

The Tenth Essay, 'On Living to One's-Self,' has this singular passage:

'Even in the common affairs of life, in love, in friendship, in marriage, how little security have we when we trust our happiness in the hands of others! Most of the friends I have seen have turned out the bitterest enemies or cold, uncomfortable acquaintance. Old companions are like meats served up too often, that lose their relish or their wholesomeness.'

We hope that this is more dramatically than truly written. We recognise nothing like it in our own circle. We had always thought that Old Friends, and Old Wine were the best.—We should conjecture that Mr. Hazlitt has been singularly unfortunate, or injudicious, in the choice of his acquaintance, did not one phenomenon stagger us. We every now and then encounter in his Essays with a *character*, apparently from the life, too mildly drawn for an enemy, too sharply for a friend. We suspect that Mr. Hazlitt does not always play quite fairly with his associates. There is a class of critics—and he may be of them—who pry into men with 'too respective eyes.' They will anatomize Regan, when Cordelia would hardly bear such dissection. We are not acquainted with Mr. Hazlitt's 'familiar faces,' but when we see certain Characters exposed and hung up, not in Satire—for the exaggerations of *that* cure themselves by their excess, as we make allowance for the overcharged features in a caricature—but certain poor whole-length figures dangling with all the *best* and *worst* of humanity about them displayed with cool and unsparing impartiality—Mr. Hazlitt must excuse us if we cannot help suspecting some of them to be the shadows of defunct Friendships—This would be a recipe indeed, a pretty sure one, for converting friends 'into bitterest enemies or cold, uncomfortable acquain-

tance'—The most expert at drawing Characters, are the very persons most likely to be deceived in individual and home instances. They will seize an infirmity, which irritates them deservedly in a companion, and go on piling up every kindred weakness they have found by experience apt to coalesce with that failing (gathered from a thousand instances) till they have built up in their fancies an *Abstract*, widely differing indeed from their poor *concrete friend!* What blunders Steele, or Sterne, may not in this way have made *at home!*—But we forget. Our business is with books. We profess not, with Mr. Hazlitt, to be Reviewers of Men.

'My first contribution.' Lamb's first contribution to the *London Magazine* had been in August 1820, 'The South-Sea House'; he refers to his first contribution under the new management.

The proof which Lamb returned was that of the *Elia* essay on 'Mackery End in Hertfordshire,' printed in the July number of the *London Magazine*, in which he quoted his favourite stanza from Wordsworth's *Yarrow Visited*:

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation.]

392. TO JOHN TAYLOR

June 30, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

You will do me injustice if you do not convey to the writer of the beautiful lines, which I now return you, my sense of the extreme kindness which dictated them. Poor Elia (call him *Ellia*) does not pretend to so very clear revelations of a future state of being as Olen seems gifted with. He stumbles about dark mountains at best; but he knows at least how to be thankful for this life, and is too thankful indeed for certain relationships lent him here, not to tremble for a possible resumption of the gift. He is too apt to express himself lightly, and cannot be sorry for the present occasion, as it has called forth a reproof so Christian-like. His *animus* at least (whatever become of it in the female termination) hath always been *cum Christianis*.

Pray make my gratefullest respects to the Poet, (do I flatter myself when I hope it may be M——y?) and say how happy I should feel myself in an acquaintance with him. I will just mention that in the middle of the second column, where I have affixed a cross, the line

One in a skeleton's ribb'd hollow cooped,

is undoubtedly wrong. Should it not be—

A skeleton's rib or ribs?

or,

In a skeleton ribb'd, hollow-coop'd?

I perfectly remember the plate in Quarles. In the first page exoteric is pronounced exòteric. It should be (if that is the word) exotèric. The false accent may be corrected by omitting the word *old.* Pray, for certain reasons, give me to the 18th *at furthest extremity* for my next.

Poor ELIA, the real, (for I am but a counterfeit,) is dead. The fact is, a person of that name, an Italian, was a fellow clerk of mine at the South Sea House, thirty (not forty) years ago, when the characters I described there existed, but had left it like myself many years; and I having a brother now there, and doubting how he might relish certain descriptions in it, I clapt down the name of Elia to it, which passed off pretty well, for Elia himself added the function of an author to that of a scrivener, like myself.

I went the other day (not having seen him for a year) to laugh over with him at my usurpation of his name, and found him, alas! no more than a name, for he died of consumption eleven months ago, and I knew not of it.

So the name has fairly devolved to me, I think; and 'tis all he has left me.

Dear sir, yours truly,
C. LAMB.

[The poem to which Lamb refers is the *Epistle to Elia,* signed 'Olen,' in the *London Magazine* for August 1821, the author of which was Sir Charles Abraham Elton (1778–1853). Suggested by the essay on 'New Year's Eve,' it moralizes on mortality, and then passes to more personal references to Lamb's other writings, with which the author was very familiar. The line

Shalt thou, ingenuous Elia, do this wrong

tells us that Elton pronounced the name as most of us now do, with the first syllable accentuated. A letter in the Huntington Library from John Taylor to Sir Charles Elton contains the sentence: 'We think Mr. Lamb pronounces the word Elià.' In this letter we find Lamb saying, 'call him Ellia,' but the present usage is not likely to change.

Mrs. Anderson's notes: 'This letter is given by Ainger and Macdonald, who

both date it 30th July, as if from a postmark, but I think it should be 30th *June*, for the following reasons:

'(1) It is most probable that Taylor sent Lamb the poem to read *before* sending it to be printed in the Magazine. Note Lamb's suggested corrections; (how funny though that he shouldn't see that the line could make good sense by reading it, "One in a skeleton's ribb'd-hollow cooped"). The poem appeared in the August No., and therefore the poem would have to be in the printer's hands about 18th July.

'(2) Lamb has no idea who the poet is. But in the letter to Taylor of 21st July he says: "Thanking you for your extract from Mr. E.'s letter." Is it not reasonable to suppose that Taylor did give Elton Lamb's message, and that he quoted his reply to Lamb?

'(3) Give me to the 18th . . . for my next ("Imperfect Sympathies"), Lamb had the proofs on the 21st. See his note to Baldwin, 7th May, and the one to Taylor, 29th or 30th July, in both of which he mentions the 18th as the date limit for sending it.

'Elia was identified by Mr. R. W. Gouldin, the Librarian at Welbeck Abbey, as F. Augustus Elia, author of a French tract entitled: *Considération sur l'état actuel de la France au mois de juin 1815. Par Un Anglais.* It is privately reprinted in *Letters from Originals at Welbeck Abbey*, 1909.'

'Animus.' In Latin *animus* is the mind, *anima* the soul. Hence Lamb's reference to the female termination.

'M——y.' Presumably James Montgomery, who, in 1824, was to bring out a book in aid of chimney-sweepers to which Lamb contributed.

'Quarles.' Book v, Emblem 8, is the text: 'O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

The following letter may be placed here, although Mrs. Anderson thought the date 17th August 1824:]

393. TO SIR CHARLES ABRAHAM ELTON

India House
to which place all letters addressed
to C. L. commonly come.

[*17th August 1821* (?).]

MY DEAR SIR,

You have overwhelmed me with your favours. I have received positively a little library from Baldwyn's. I do not know how I have deserved such a bounty.

We have been up to the ear in the classics ever since it came. I have been greatly pleased, but most, I think, with the Hesiod, —the Titan battle quite amazed me. Gad, it was no child's play —and then the homely aphorisms at the end of the works—

how adroitly you have turned them! Can he be the same Hesiod who did the Titans? the latter is—

——wine
Which to madness does incline.

But to read the Days and Works, is like eating nice brown bread, homely sweet and nutritive. Apollonius was new to me. I had confounded him with the conjuror of that name. Medea is glorious; but I cannot give up Dido. She positively is the only Fine Lady of Antiquity: her courtesy to the Trojans is altogether queen-like. Eneas is a most disagreeable person. Ascanius a pretty young master. Mezentius for my money. His dying speech shames Turpin—not the Archbishop I mean, but the roadster of that name.

I have been ashamed to find how many names of classics (and more than their names) you have introduced me to, that before I was ignorant of. Your commendation of Master Chapman arrideth me. Can any one read the pert modern Frenchify'd notes, &c., in Pope's translation, and contrast them with solemn weighty prefaces of Chapman, writing in full faith, as he evidently does, of the plenary inspiration of his author—worshipping his meanest scraps and relics as divine—without one sceptical misgiving of their authenticity, and doubt which was the properest to expound Homer to their countrymen. Reverend Chapman! you have read his hymn to Pan (the Homeric)—why, it is Milton's blank verse clothed with rhyme. Paradise Lost could scarce lose, could it be so accoutred.

I shall die in the belief that he has improved upon Homer, in the Odyssey in particular—the disclosure of Ulysses of himself, to Alcinous, his previous behaviour at the song of the stern strife arising between Achilles and himself (how it raises him above the *Iliad* Ulysses!) but you know all these things quite as well as I do. But what a deaf ear old C. would have turned to the doubters in Homer's real personality! They might as well have denied the appearance of J. C. in the flesh.—He apparently believed all the fables of H.'s birth, &c.

Those notes of Bryant have caused the greatest disorder in my brain-pan. Well, I will not flatter when I say that we have had two or three long evening's *good reading* out of your kind present.

I will say nothing of the tenderest parts in your own little

volume, at the end of such a slatternly scribble as this, but indeed they cost us some tears. I scrawl away because of interruptions every moment. You guess how it is in a busy office—papers thrust into your hand when your hand is busiest—and every anti-classical disavocation.

. [*Conclusion cut away.*]

[Sir Charles Elton seems to have sent Lamb a number of his books, principally his *Specimens of the Classical Poets . . . from Homer to Tryphiodorus translated into English Verse*, Baldwin, 1814, in three volumes. Lamb refers first to the passage from Hesiod's *Theogony*, and then to his *Works and Days* (which Chapman translated).

'Wine, which to madness. . .' From *To Amoret*, by Edmund Waller.

Apollonius Rhodius was the author of *The Argonautics*; the magician was Apollonius of Tyana. Lamb then passes on to Virgil. For the death of Mezentius see the *Æneid*, Book x, at the end. The makers of broadsides had probably credited Dick Turpin with a dying speech.

'Those notes of Bryant.' Lamb possibly refers to Jacob Bryant's *Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer*, 1775, or his dissertation on the Trojan War, which contends that no such conflict ever happened.

'Your own little volume.' Probably *The Brothers and Other Poems*, by Elton, 1820.]

394. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

July 17, 1821.

DEAR AYRTON,

In consequence of the August Coronation we propose postponing (I wonder if these words ever met so close before—mark the Elegancy) our Wensday this week to friday, when a grand rural fete champetre will be given at Russell house. The back garden to be illuminated in honor of the late ceremony.

Vivat Regina
Moriatur * * *

C. L.

[The coronation of George IV took place on Thursday, 19th July. Lamb indicates him by the three stars: Rex.

'Vivat Regina' refers to Lamb's steady partisanship for the luckless Queen Caroline, who, having survived the divorce proceedings in 1820, was still fighting for recognition. She was, however, to die within less than three weeks of the coronation, which she attempted in vain to attend.]

395. TO JOHN TAYLOR

July 21, 1821.

DR. SIR,

The *Lond. Mag.* is chiefly pleasant to me, because some of my friends write in it. I hope Hazlitt intends to go on with it, we cannot spare Table Talk. For myself I feel almost exhausted, but I will try my hand a little longer, and shall not at all events be written out of it by newspaper paragraphs. Your proofs do not seem to want my helping hand, they are quite correct always. For God's sake change *Sisera* to *Jael*. This last paper will be a choke-pear I fear to some people, but as you do not object to it, I can be under little apprehension of your exerting your Censorship too rigidly.

Thanking you for your extract from Mr. E.'s letter,

I remain, Dr Sir,

Your obliged,

C. LAMB.

[Hazlitt continued his 'Table Talk' in the *London Magazine* until December 1821.

Lamb seems to have been treated foolishly by some newspaper critic; but I have not traced the paragraphs in question.

The proof was that of the *Elia* essay, 'Imperfect Sympathies,' which was printed (with a fuller title) in the number for August 1821. The reference to Jael is in the passage on Braham and the Jewish character.

'Censorship.' Taylor had probably been using the blue pencil.

'Mr. E.' was probably Lamb's way of referring to Sir Charles Elton.

Since Hood was also among the regular contributors to the *London Magazine* I place here Lamb's first letter to him, of course undated.]

396. TO THOMAS HOOD

DR. SIR,

Can you take your tea with us? It is *now* pouring out. I want to restore your MS. &c.

C. LAMB.

Monday.

[Hood was then twenty-two. There is a charming account in his *Literary Reminiscences* of his first meeting with Lamb, whom he admired and reverenced above any other man. Hood also, in *Hood's Own* for 1822, describes vividly the *London Magazine* dinners.]

397. TO JOHN TAYLOR

[No date: say about *Wednesday, 25th July 1821.*]

DEAR SIR,

I acknowledge with thankfulness your two favours of £20 and an invitation to venison, which I had almost despaired of tasting again. I hope I shall not be wanting in return for either.

I remain

Very sincerely yours

C. LAMB.

I shall do myself the pleasure of waiting upon you on Friday.

J. Taylor Esq.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'I assume this to refer to Taylor & Hessey's first dinner to their contributors, possibly Friday, 27th July, while the following letter was written by Lamb on the Sunday or Monday *after* the dinner.']

398. TO JOHN TAYLOR

[No date: say Sunday or Monday, *29th or 30th July* 1821.]

DEAR SIR,

Is it to you, or to some other kind unknown, that I owe my safe arrival home on Friday night? I confess I have no knowledge of the manner how, or time when. Between ourselves, I am not much better this morning. But don't let it go abroad that Elia is a xxxxkard. Tell it not to Blackwood, publish it not in the pages of Colburn, lest the &c—

By the way, how is your *room*?

Can you oblige me with a number of the London which contains Mrs. Battle on Whist, I think November, December, or January, not sure which. A friend has presented me with a treatise on the game, & I must make some return in kind.

No more letters from me now till next Aug. 18th.

Dr Sir,

yours truly, C. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'This is a memory version of one of a series of letters to Taylor & Hessey sold at Puttick & Simpson's, 18th March 1919. Admiral Burney's treatise on Whist was published in 1821. The essay on "Mrs. Battle" appeared in the *London Magazine* for February 1821.'

In Mr. Blunden's *Charles Lamb: His Life recorded by his Contemporaries*, 1934, there is a letter from J. A. Hessey to John Taylor stating that Thomas Benyon, the firm's porter, helped Lamb home and smoked with him for an hour. But the date of this is given as 1824.]

399. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Tuesday 14 Aug. '21.

A rubber to-morrow evening at 8. Closed windows on account of the demise of her Majesty.

Russell House.

[The unfortunate Queen Caroline died on 7th August 1821. Her funeral was not until 26th August at Brunswick.]

400. TO JOHN TAYLOR

August 22, 1821.

DEAR SIR,

I think I remember an ambiguity left in the proof of yesterday. Can you remove it? It is where I speak of Lovell interceding for a delinquent, whose situation he might have succeeded to 'But the man had a wife and family.' Then I go on to say: 'He (meaning L.) was lively &c.'

But 'He' follows the sentence in which the delinqt is named —could He be changed to L'—or the doubt removed by making 'He was a lively' and begin a new paragraph which I think wd be best. Never mind if it is too late & do not trouble yourself to answr this. C. LAMB.

[The reference is to the essay on 'The Old Benchers of the Inner Temple,' and the difficulty was overcome by substituting 'L' for 'He.' Lovel was a character sketch of John Lamb, senior. The whole passage was taken out when Lamb reprinted the essay in *Elia*.

On the cover of the note is written: 'The name of the Bearward now I remember was "Lisha"'—referring to the passage in the same essay about Thomas Coventry, 'who made a solitude of children wherever he came, for they fled his insufferable presence, as they would have shunned an Elisha bear.']

401. TO CHARLES COWDEN CLARKE

MY DEAR SIR, [*Summer 1821.*]

Your letter has lain in a drawer of my desk, upbraiding me every time I open the said drawer, but it is almost impossible to answer such a letter in such a place, and I am out of the habit of replying to epistles otherwhere than at office. You express yourself concerning H. like a true friend, and have made me feel that I have somehow neglected him, but without knowing very well how to rectify it. I live so remote from him—by Hackney—that he is almost out of the pale of visitation at Hampstead. And I come but seldom to Covt Gardn this summer time—and when I do, am sure to pay for the late hours and pleasant Novello suppers which I incur. I also am an invalid. But I will hit upon some way, that you shall not have cause for your reproof in future. But do not think I take the hint unkindly. When I shall be brought low by any sickness or untoward circumstance, write just such a letter to some tardy friend of mine—or come up yourself with your friendly Henshaw face—and that will be better. I shall not forget in haste our casual day at Margate. May we have many such there or elsewhere! God bless you for your kindness to H., which I will remember. But do not show N. this, for the flouting infidel doth mock when Christians cry God bless us. Yours and *his, too,* and all our little circle's most affecte.

C. LAMB.

Mary's love included.

[Charles Cowden Clarke (1787–1877) was the son of a schoolmaster who had served as usher with George Dyer at Northampton. Afterwards he established a school at Enfield, where Keats was one of the scholars. Charles Cowden Clarke, at this time a bookseller, remained one of Keats's friends, and was a friend also of Leigh Hunt's, on whose behalf he seems to have written to Lamb. Later he became a partner of Alfred Novello, the musical publisher, son of Vincent Novello. In 1828 he married Mary Victoria Novello.

'Friendly Henshaw face.' A reference to Lamb's godfather. See the letter to Mrs. John Lamb of 22nd May 1822.

'H.' Leigh Hunt, who left England for Italy in November 1821, to join Shelley and Byron.

'N.' was Novello, who seems to have shared Macbeth's inability to say 'Amen.']

402. MARY LAMB TO MRS. WILLIAM AYRTON

[No date: *1821.*]
Thursday Morning.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

The kind interest you took in my perplexities of yesterday makes me feel that you will be well pleased to hear I got through my complicated business far better than I had ventured to hope I should do. In the first place let me thank you, my good friend, for your good advice; for, had I not gone to Martin first he would have sent a senseless letter to Mr. Rickman, and *now* he is coming here to-day in order to frame one in conjunction with my brother.

What will be Mr. Rickman's final determination I know not, but he and Mrs. Rickman both gave me a most kind reception, and a most patient hearing, and then Mr. R. walked with me as far as Bishopsgate Street, conversing the whole way on the same unhappy subject. I will see you again the very first opportunity till when farewel with grateful thanks.

How senseless I was not to make you go back in that empty coach. I never have but one idea in my poor head at a time.

Yours affectionately

M. LAMB.

at Mr. Coston's

No. 14 Kingsland Row Dalston.

[The explanation of this letter is that owing to certain of Martin Burney's irregularities, Rickman, as Clerk Assistant at the table of the House of Commons, had been obliged to discharge him from a clerkship.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Rickman's final determination was evidently to take M. B. back at a reduced salary. See Lamb to Rickman 20th November: "I hope your hopes will be justified in him." Since Lamb also says he has not seen Martin for two months, and we know Mary was ill in October, we may place her letter pretty certainly in September.']

403. CHARLES LAMB TO J. A. HESSEY

DEAR SIR, [No date: *? September 1821.*]

I am very sorry you should have had so much trouble about my parcel. I have written to Peter Ball (quere Bell); and I return the MS. Poem, *declining as I always do my opinion as to the*

expedience of printing it. I wish never to interfere in matters of that kind.

I was otherwise pleased with the subject, and some of the treatment of it, but that kind of poetry requires more Labour than at present appears.

Yours in haste and hurry

[*Not signed.*]

Acct^{s} Office, E. I. H.

I will think about the Lion's Head.

[The result of Lamb's thought was the appearance in the 'Lion's Head' section of the *London Magazine* for November 1821, of the following communication:

ELIA TO HIS CORRESPONDENTS

A Correspondent, who writes himself Peter Ball, or Bell—for his hand-writing is as ragged as his manners—admonishes me of the old saying, that some people (under a courteous periphrasis I slur his less ceremonious epithet) had need have good memories. In my 'Old Benchers of the Inner Temple,' I have delivered myself, and truly, a Templar born. Bell clamours upon this, and thinketh that he hath caught a fox. It seems that in a former paper, retorting upon a weekly scribbler who had called my good identity in question, (see P.S. to my 'Chapter on Ears,') I profess myself a native of some spot near Cavendish Square, deducing my remoter origin from Italy. But who does not see, except this tinkling cymbal, that in that idle fiction of Genoese ancestry I was answering a fool according to his folly—that Elia there expresseth himself ironically, as to an approved slanderer, who hath no right to the truth, and can be no fit recipient of it? Such a one it is usual to leave to his delusions; or, leading him from error still to contradictory error, to plunge him (as we say) deeper in the mire, and give him line till he suspend himself. No understanding reader could be imposed upon by such obvious rhodomontade to suspect me for an alien, or believe me other than English.—To a second Correspondent, who signs himself 'a Wiltshire man,' and claims me for a countryman upon the strength of an equivocal phrase in my 'Christ's Hospital,' a more mannerly reply is due. Passing over the Genoese fable,

which Bell makes such a ring about, he nicely detects a more subtle discrepancy, which Bell was too obtuse to strike upon. Referring to the passage (in page 484 of our second volume), I must confess, that the term 'native town,' applied to Calne, *primâ facie*, seems to bear out the construction which my friendly Correspondent is willing to put upon it. The context too, I am afraid, a little favours it. But where the words of an author, taken literally, compared with some other passage in his writings, admitted to be authentic, involve a palpable contradiction, it hath been the custom of the ingenuous commentator to smooth the difficulty by the supposition, that in one case an allegorical or tropical sense was chiefly intended. So by the word 'native,' I may be supposed to mean a town where I might have been born; or where it might be desirable that I should have been born, as being situate in wholesome air, upon a dry chalky soil, in which I delight; or a town, with the inhabitants of which I passed some weeks, a summer or two ago, so agreeably, that they and it became in a manner native to me. Without some such latitude of interpretation in the present case, I see not how we can avoid falling into a gross error in physics, as to conceive that a gentleman may be born in two places, from which all modern and ancient testimony is alike abhorrent. Bacchus cometh the nearest to it, whom I remember Ovid to have honoured with the epithet 'Twice born.' But not to mention that he is so called (we conceive) in reference to the places *whence* rather than the places *where* he was delivered—for by either birth he may probably be challenged for a Theban—in a strict way of speaking, he was a *filius femoris* by no means in the same sense as he had been before a *filius alvi*, for that latter was but a secondary and tralatitious way of being born, and he but a denizen of the second house of his geniture. Thus much by way of explanation was thought due to the courteous 'Wiltshire man.'—To 'Indagator,' 'Investigator,' 'Incertus,' and the rest of the pack, that are so importunate about the true localities of his birth—as if, forsooth, Elia were presently about to be passed to his parish—to all such churchwarden critics he answereth, that, any explanation here given notwithstanding, he hath not so fixed his nativity (like a rusty vane) to one dull spot, but that, if he seeth occasion, or the argument shall demand it, he will be born again, in future

papers, in whatever place, and at whatever period, shall seem good unto him.

Modò me Thebis—modò Athenis.

ELIA.

[The true poet, says Horace, *Epistles*, II. i. 213, can set me down 'now at Thebes, now at Athens.']

404. TO J. A. HESSEY OR JOHN TAYLOR

[*26th October 1821.*]

DEAR SIR,

I send these slips, because I find them done, and want to get rid of them. I am most uneasily situated at home, and if what I expect, takes place, it may be long before I shall have any communications of the sort to send. I beg you will accept this brief token of good will, and leave me to myself and time to recover into a state for writing.

I am with best wishes for the Lond: Mag—

C. LAMB.

[Lamb was expecting his brother John's death, which occurred that day (26th October, 1821), and probably caused him a good deal of business as his executor.

The essay for the *London Magazine* was 'My First Play,' printed in the December number.]

405. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

[*27th October 1821.*]

I come, Grimalkin! Dalston, near Hackney, 27th Octr. One thousand 8 hundred and twenty one years and a wee-bit since you and I were redeemed. I doubt if *you* are done properly yet.

['I come.' Said of the First Witch in *Macbeth*, Act I. Scene *i*, 9.]

406. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Dalston, *30 Oct. 1821.*

MY DEAR AYRTON,

I take your kindness very thankfully.—A bit of kindness at such times is precious. I am indeed in an uneasy state. But I

think it well that the death of poor John should have happened at a time that my sister can be but half sensible to it. She is with me at Dalston, and I ventured on my own advice to acquaint her, as she was, with the worst, for what a communication should I have had to make upon her recovery! It does not seem much to have altered the state of her mind, and now she will gradually come to herself with nothing new to tell. Her illness has been very obstinate, but I am in no hurry for her to recover, that the idea may be in her mind as long as it can, before she is able to comprehend its weight. I am in a state of trial, but I do not lose myself. The funeral over, I must return to business. I understand your friendship in writing me to join you, but it would do me no good just now. I hope to meet you again with comparative cheerfulness in some few weeks.

Believe me, very sincerely yours,

CHAS. LAMB.

Kind love to Mrs. A. and God bless you all.

407. TO WILLIAM HONE

9 Nov., '21.

DEAR SIR,

I was not very well nor in spirits when your pleasant note reached me, or should have noticed it sooner. Our Hebrew brethren seem to appreciate the good things of this life in more liberal latitude than we, to judge from their frequent graces. One, I think, you must have omitted: 'After concluding a bargain.' Their distinction of 'Fruits growing upon trees,' and 'upon the ground,' I can understand. A sow makes quite a different grunt (*her grace*) over chesnuts and pignuts. The last is a little above Elia. With thanks, and wishing grace be with you.

Yours, C. LAMB.

Mr. Hone,
45, Ludgate Hill.

[Hone seems to have written to Lamb with reference to the *Elia* essay 'Grace Before Meat,' which appeared in the *London Magazine* for November 1821.]

408. TO JOHN RICKMAN

E. I. House,
November 20, 1821.

DEAR RICKMAN,

The Poor Admiral's death would have been a greater shock to me, but that I have been used to death lately. Poor Jim White's departure last year first broke the spell. I had been so fortunate as to have lost no friend in that way for many long years, and began to think people did not die. But they have since gone off thickly. My brother's death happened when my sister was incapable of feeling it, but the knowledge of it was communicated to her at the time, and she had not to receive it as a shock when she came back to reason. I have reason to think this circumstance a great alleviation. She is now perfectly recovered after a very long illness and pretty well resigned. We are come to town this day and shall be glad to receive a visit from you or to pay you one.

M. C. B. I have neither seen nor heard from for these two months. I hope your hopes will be justified in him. I am, dear R., yours faithfully, C. LAMB.

[Admiral Burney died on 17th November 1821. James White, the hero of the *Elia* essay on chimney-sweepers, and the author, probably with Lamb's help, of *Falstaff's Letters*, had died on 13th March 1820.

M. C. B. was Martin Charles Burney.]

409. TO JOHN TAYLOR

[No date: probably *December 1821.*]

DR. SIR,

I had forgot the fragmt was ever printed. Now I think it was in the Albion Newspaper 20 years or so ago. It has of course lived (by being forgotten) to be original again.

Yours truly.

I should have thanked you for the snuff-box.

[This letter refers I think to the 'Dramatic Fragment' (cancelled passage of *John Woodvil*), which was printed in the *London Magazine* for January 1822, signed by three stars. It appeared in *Recreations in Agriculture*, No. XII, of which Lamb was probably thinking, and not the *Albion*.]

410. TO JOHN TAYLOR

[No date: *January 1822.*]

DR. T

The Proof is damnably incorrect. Pray look to FOPPINGTON particularly, printed Toppington. Horrid.—& *Port* immediately following, for *Pert.*

The concluding part did not come with these two slips. Pray have an eye upon it. The compositor is in love, I take it.

E.

[This note refers to the *Elia* essay 'On Some of the Old Actors,' which appeared in the *London* for February 1822.]

411. TO J. A. HESSEY

[No date: *February 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

Near the top of the last page of 'Distant Correspondents'—pray substitute *what I now send* for all that follows after the words 'Locksmiths are your great capitalists,' or some such words—

Mr. Hessey.

[The essay on 'Distant Correspondents' was in the *London Magazine* for March 1822. The accompanying passage is missing.]

412. TO CHARLES WELLS

[No date: probably *Spring 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

I have received a volume of bright little stories, which I do not know or have heard, but guess to be yours. Whosever they are, both myself & Mary have been much pleased with them. The style is many times original & uncommon, rich stuff that would have beat out & spread over a much greater space if the author had not disdained economy. We are at Dalston at present, but I shall hope to see you ere long, to renew acquaintᵒᵉ. The fact is I am not strong enough for visiting.—Edward and Edmond, and the last tale of all are the favourites.

C. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'See *Sidelights on Lamb*, page 343, where Bertram Dobell identifies the person addressed as Charles Jeremiah Wells (author of

Joseph and His Brethren) whose *Stories after Nature*, of which 'Edward and Edmond' is one, were published in 1822. The letter implies a previous acquaintance with Wells, fairly intimate, since Lamb speaks of "Mary."'

Wells, who once played a practical joke on Tom Keats and thus incensed his brother the poet, was a friend of Hazlitt, and was late in life described as a genius by Rossetti and Swinburne. His son broke the bank at Monte Carlo.]

413. TO S. T. COLERIDGE

March 9th, 1822.

DEAR C.,

It gives me great satisfaction to hear that the pig turned out so well—they are interesting creatures at a certain age—what a pity such buds should blow out into the maturity of rank bacon! You had all some of the crackling—and brain sauce—did you remember to rub it with butter, and gently dredge it a little, just before the crisis? Did the eyes come away kindly with no Œdipean avulsion? Was the crackling the colour of the ripe pomegranate? Had you no complement of boiled neck of mutton before it, to blunt the edge of delicate desire? Did you flesh maiden teeth in it? Not that I sent the pig, or can form the remotest guess what part Owen could play in the business. I never knew him give anything away in my life. He would not begin with strangers. I suspect the pig, after all, was meant for me; but at the unlucky juncture of time being absent, the present somehow went round to Highgate. To confess an honest truth, a pig is one of those things I could never think of sending away. Teals, wigeons, snipes, barn-door fowl, ducks, geese—your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself. They are but self-extended; but pardon me if I stop somewhere—where the fine feeling of benevolence giveth a higher smack than the sensual rarity—there my friends (or any good man) may command me; but pigs are pigs, and I myself therein am nearest to myself. Nay, I should think it an affront, an undervaluing done to Nature who bestowed such a boon upon me, if in a churlish mood I parted with the precious gift. One of the bitterest pangs of remorse I ever felt was when a child—when my kind old aunt had strained her pocket-strings to bestow a sixpenny whole plum-cake upon me. In my way home through

the Borough, I met a venerable old man, not a mendicant, but thereabouts—a look-beggar, not a verbal petitionist; and in the coxcombry of taught-charity I gave away the cake to him. I walked on a little in all the pride of an Evangelical peacock, when of a sudden my old aunt's kindness crossed me—the sum it was to her—the pleasure she had a right to expect that I—not the old impostor—should take in eating her cake—the cursed ingratitude by which, under the colour of a Christian virtue, I had frustrated her cherished purpose. I sobbed, wept, and took it to heart so grievously, that I think I never suffered the like—and I was right. It was a piece of unfeeling hypocrisy, and proved a lesson to me ever after. The cake has long been masticated, consigned to the dunghill with the ashes of that unseasonable pauper.

But when Providence, who is better to us all than our aunts, gives me a pig, remembering my temptation and my fall, I shall endeavour to act towards it more in the spirit of the donor's purpose.

Yours (short of pig) to command in everything, C. L.

[This letter probably led to the immediate composition of the *Elia* essay 'A Dissertation on Roast Pig,' which was printed in the *London Magazine* for September 1822. See also 'Thoughts on Presents of Game' in my edition of Lamb's *Works*.

'Owen.' Lamb's landlord in Russell Street.

'My kind old aunt . . . the Borough.' This is rather perplexing. Lamb, to the best of our knowledge, never as a child lived anywhere but in the Temple. His only aunt of whom we know anything lived with the family also in the Temple. But John Lamb's will proves Lamb to have had two aunts. The reference to the Borough suggests therefore that the aunt in question was not Sarah Lamb (Aunt Hetty), but her sister.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'On 14th March 1822 John Lamb's pictures were sold at Christie's.']

414. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

20th March, 1822.

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

A letter from you is very grateful, I have not seen a Kendal postmark so long! We are pretty well save colds and rheumatics, and a certain deadness to every thing, which I think I may date from poor John's Loss, and another accident or two at the same time, that has made me almost bury myself at Dalston, where

yet I see more faces than I could wish. Deaths over-set one and put one out long after the recent grief. Two or three have died within this last two twelvemths., and so many parts of me have been numbed. One sees a picture, reads an anecdote, starts a casual fancy, and thinks to tell of it to this person in preference to every other—the person is gone whom it would have peculiarly suited. It won't do for *another*. Every departure destroys a class of sympathies. There's Capt. Burney gone!—what fun has whist now? what matters it what you lead, if you can no longer fancy him looking over you? One never hears any thing, but the image of the particular person occurs with whom alone almost you would care to share the intelligence. Thus one distributes oneself about—and now for so many parts of me I have lost the market. Common natures do not suffice me. Good people, as they are called, won't serve. I want individuals. I am made up of queer points and I want so many answering needles. The going away of friends does not make the remainder more precious. It takes so much from them as there was a common link. A. B. and C. make a party. A. dies. B. not only loses A. but all A.'s part in C. C. loses A.'s part in B., and so the alphabet sickens by subtraction of interchangeables. I express myself muddily, capite dolente. I have a dulling cold. My theory is to enjoy life, but the practice is against it. I grow ominously tired of official confinement. Thirty years have I served the Philistines, and my neck is not subdued to the yoke. You don't know how wearisome it is to breathe the air of four pent walls without relief day after day, all the golden hours of the day between 10 and 4 without ease or interposition. Tædet me harum quotidianarum formarum, these pestilential clerk faces always in one's dish. O for a few years between the grave and the desk! they are the same, save that at the latter you are outside the machine. The foul enchanter—letters four do form his name—Busirane is his name in hell—that has curtailed you of some domestic comforts, hath laid a heavier hand on me, not in present infliction, but in taking away the hope of enfranchisement. I dare not whisper to myself a Pension on this side of absolute incapacitation and infirmity, till years have sucked me dry. Otium cum indignitate. I had thought in a green old age (O green thought!) to have retired to Ponder's End—emblematic name how beautiful!

in the Ware road, there to have made up my accounts with Heaven and the Company, toddling about between it and Cheshunt, anon stretching on some fine Izaac Walton morning to Hoddesdon or Amwell, careless as a Beggar, but walking, walking ever, till I fairly walkd myself off my legs, dying walking!

The hope is gone. I sit like Philomel all day (but not singing) with my breast against this thorn of a Desk, with the only hope that some Pulmonary affliction may relieve me. Vide Lord Palmerston's report of the Clerks in the war office (Debates, this morning's Times) by which it appears in 20 years, as many Clerks have been coughd and catarrhd out of it into their freer graves.

Thank you for asking about the Pictures. Milton hangs over my fire side in Covt. Gard. (when I am there), the rest have been sold for an old song, wanting the eloquent tongue that should have set them off!

You have gratifyd me with liking my meeting with Dodd. For the Malvolio story—the thing is become in verity a sad task and I eke it out with any thing. If I could slip out of it I shd be happy, but our chief reputed assistants have forsaken us. The opium eater crossed us once with a dazzling path, and hath as suddenly left us darkling; and in short I shall go on from dull to worse, because I cannot resist the Bookseller's importunity—the old plea you know of authors, but I believe on my part sincere.

Hartley I do not so often see, but I never see him in unwelcome hour. I thoroughly love and honor him.

I send you a frozen Epistle, but it is winter and dead time of the year with me. May heaven keep something like spring and summer up with you, strengthen your eyes and make mine a little lighter to encounter with them, as I hope they shall yet and again, before all are closed.

Yours, with every kind rembe. C. L.

I had almost forgot to say, I think you thoroughly right about presentation copies. I should like to see you print a book I should grudge to purchase for its size. D——n me, but I would have it though!

[John Lamb's will left everything to his brother. We must suppose that his widow was independently provided for. I doubt if the brothers had seen each other except casually for some time. The *Elia* essay 'My Relations' contains John Lamb's character sketch under the name of James Elia.

'Tædet me,' etc. 'I am weary of these everyday shapes'—Terence, *Eunuchus*, II. iii. 6. A touch of sarcasm here, since in Terence *formarum* is 'beauties.'

'The foul enchanter.' Busirane is the name of the enchanter from whom Amoret was rescued by Britomart (Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, III. xi).

'Letters four do form his name.' From Coleridge's war eclogue, *Fire, Famine and Slaughter*, where the letters form the name of Pitt. Here they stand for Joseph Hume, not Lamb's friend, but Joseph Hume, M.P. (1777–1855), who had attacked with success abuses in the East India Company; had revised economically the system of collecting the revenue, thus touching Wordsworth as Distributor of Stamps; and had opposed Vansittart's scheme for the reduction of pension charges.

'I sit like Philomel,' etc. Poem xxi of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, by Richard Barnfield, describes the nightingale thus:

> She, poor bird, as all forlorn,
> Lean'd her breast up-till a thorn,
> And there sung the dolefull'st ditty . . .

'Vide Lord Palmerston's report.' In *The Times* of 21st March is the report of a debate on the estimates. Palmerston proved a certain amount of reduction of salary in the War Office. Incidentally he remarked that 'since 1810 not fewer than twenty-six clerks had died of pulmonary complaints, and disorders arising from sedentary habits.'

'Milton' was the portrait, already described, which had been left to Lamb. Lamb gave it as a dowry to Emma Isola when she became Mrs. Moxon. It is now in the Public Library of New York.

'My meeting with Dodd . . . Malvolio story.' In the *Elia* essay 'The Old Actors,' in the *London Magazine* for February 1822 (see vol. ii of my edition).

'Our chief reputed assistants.' Hazlitt had left the *London Magazine*; Scott, the original editor, was dead. De Quincey, whose *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* were appearing in its pages, has left a record of a visit to the Lambs about this time. See 'London Reminiscences' in his *Works*.

'Hartley.' Hartley Coleridge, then a young man of twenty-five, was living in London after the unhappy sudden termination of his Oxford career.]

415. TO MRS. RANDAL NORRIS

March 26, 1822.

DEAR MRS. N.,

Mary will be in town this Evens or to-morrow morns as she wants to see you about another business. She will in the meantime enquire respecting the young woman.

Yours sincerely,

E. I. H. C. LAMB.

Mrs. Norris,
Tanfield Court, Temple.

[I place here the following undated letter because it refers to the Norris family, very old friends of the Lambs, with Widford associations.]

416. TO CHARLES OLLIER

DEAR OLLIER,

You will much oblige me by permitting a reference to be made to you in an advertisement which a most worthy daughter of a most worthy friend of ours is publishing for a Teachership in a family. Her father is Mr Norris, Sub treasurer of the Inner Temple, but the circumstance of their living in the Temple would not be quite a proper thing to put in an advertisement, & if a letter should come to E. N. at Mr Ollier's Vere St &c. you have nothing to do but to put it in post to us 20 Russell St. They think that a Bookseller's would look *literary*. Excuse this trouble from

C. LAMB.

[Later, as we shall see, the live Miss Norris opened a school at Widford.]

417. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

India House, April 13, 1822.

DEAR GODWIN,

I cannot imagine how you, who never in your writings have expressed yourself disrespectfully of any one but your Maker, can have given offence to Rickman.

I have written to the Numberer of the People to ask when it will be convenient to him to be at home to Mr. Booth. I think it probable he may be out of town in the Parliamentary recess, but doubt not of a speedy answer. Pray return my recognition to Mr. Booth, from whose excellent Tables of Interest I daily receive inexpressible official facilities.

Yours ever, C. LAMB.

[This was Rickman's reply:

MY DEAR LAMB

I have received your note, and can only say that Mr. D. Booth will find me at Home, or among the Pop^{n} Returns (?) at the Ho. Commons, if he calls between 10 and 11 o'clock, Tuesday or Wednesday.

But pray tell him that I deal in nothing beyond facts and must not be

expected to give any opinion,—in truth I am not conscious that I have any, on the subject which seems to occupy Mr. Booth.

Yours always faithfully

J. RICKMAN.

Palace Yard,
Monday Morn.,
15 April, 1822.

Lamb sent this reply on to Booth, with the following note: 'Mr. Lamb's respects to Mr. B. This is Mr. Rickman's note to *him*. Mr. R. lives in St. Stephen's Court, New Palace Yard—hopes Mr. B. will find him communicative.'

The beginning of Lamb's letter to Godwin reminds one of Godwin's remark about Coleridge, 'God bless him—to use a vulgar expression,' as recorded by Coleridge in one of his letters. Lamb once said of Godwin (and to him) that he had read more books that were not worth reading than any man in England.]

418. TO J. A. HESSEY

April 15th 1822.

DEAR SIR,

I am glad you like my sweeps. I am afraid I shall be troublesome with certain alterations which I wish made towards the end.

I have not sufficiently thanked you for the Books you were good enough to send me. The Purgatory & Paradise at least were quite new to me & a most rich treat.

Pray make my acknowledgmts to Mr. Cunningham. Maxwell is full of all good things, good poetry, good nature, good feelings. Assure the author I have more than an imperfect sympathy with it. The incidents are nevertheless too easy to be foreseen, &c, for acting.

What is gone of the Opium Eater, where is Barry Cornwall, & above all what is become of Janus Weathercock—or by his worse name of Vink—something? He is much wanted. He was a genius of the Lond. Mag. The rest of us are single Essayists.

You must recruit. You will get too serious else. Janus was characteristic. He talkd about it & about it. The Lond. Mag. wants the personal note too much. Blackwd owes everything to it.

Think on it.

C. L.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The last few sentences are what I can remember after reading the original at Maggs's.'

The *Elia* essay 'The Praise of Chimney-sweepers' appeared in the *London Magazine* for May 1822.

The references are, I imagine, to Cary's translation of Dante, Cary being one of the regular contributors to the *London Magazine*, and also on Taylor & Hessey's list; to Allan Cunningham, another member of the staff, who had written an Elizabethan drama called *Sir Marmaduke Maxwell*, which Sir Walter Scott admired; to De Quincey, who had last written in the December number, 1821, and resumed later with his 'Letters to a Young Man whose education had been neglected': to B. W. Procter; and to 'Janus Weathercock,' alias 'C. Van Vinkbooms.'

'About it & about it.' From Pope's *Dunciad*, iv. 252.]

419. TO J. A. HESSEY

[Written same day as previous letter.]

You will think me very silly, but in addition to the alterations made in the proof can you oblige me with the following?—

Remove those lines

> Golden lads & lasses must,
> As chimney-sweepers, come to dust[1]

from the end, and place them before the preceding paragraph—after the word 'entertainment.' They are now awkward.

C. LAMB.

[1] and put a — at the word 'dust,' instead of a *full stop.*

[The couplet now stands as Lamb desired in the *Elia* essay on chimney-sweepers.]

420. TO WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH

[Dated at end: *7th May 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

I have read your poetry with pleasure. The tales are pretty and prettily told, the language often finely poetical. It is only sometimes a little careless, I mean as to redundancy. I have marked certain passages (in pencil only, which will easily obliterate) for your consideration. Excuse this liberty. For the distinction you offer me of a dedication, I feel the honor of it, but I do not think it would advantage the publication. I am hardly on an eminence enough to warrant it. The Reviewers, who

are no friends of mine—the two big ones especially who make a point of taking no notice of anything I bring out—may take occasion by it to decry us both. But I leave you to your own judgment. Perhaps, if you wish to give me a kind word, it will be more appropriate *before your republication of Tourneur.*

The 'Specimens' would give a handle to it, which the poems might seem to want. But I submit it to yourself with the old recollection that 'beggars should not be chusers' and remain with great respect and wishing success to both your publications,

Your obet. Sert.

C. LAMB.

No hurry at all for Tourneur.

Tuesday 7 May '22.

[William Harrison Ainsworth (1805–82), afterwards known as a novelist, was then articled to a Manchester solicitor, but had begun his literary career. The book to which Lamb refers was called *The Works of Cheviot Tichburn*, 1822, and was dedicated to him in the following terms: 'To my friend Charles Lamb, as a slight mark of gratitude for his kindness and admiration of his character, these poems are inscribed.'

Ainsworth was meditating an edition of the works of Cyril Tourneur, author of *The Atheist's Tragedy*, to whom Lamb had drawn attention in the *Dramatic Specimens*, 1808. The book was never published.]

421. TO WILLIAM GODWIN

May 16, 1822.

DEAR GODWIN,

I sincerely feel for all your trouble. Pray use the enclosed £50, and pay me when you can. I shall make it my business to see you very shortly.

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[Owing largely to a flaw in the title-deed of his house at 41 Skinner Street, which he had to forfeit, Godwin had come upon poverty greater than any he had previously suffered, although he had been always more or less necessitous.

The work on which Godwin was then labouring was his *History of the Commonwealth*, 1824–8. His new home was in the Strand. In 1833 he received the post of Yeoman Usher of the Exchequer, which he held till his death in 1836, although its duties had vanished ere then.]

422. TO MRS. JOHN LAMB

22 May 1822.

DEAR MRS. LAMB,

A letter has come to Arnold for Mrs. Phillips, and, as I have not her address, I take this method of sending it to you. That old rogue's name is Sherwood, as you guessed, but as I named the shirts to him, I think he must have them. Your character of him made me almost repent of the bounty.

You must consider this letter as Mary's—for writing letters is such a trouble and puts her to such twitters (family modesty, you know; it is the way with me, but I try to get over it) that in pity I offer to do it for her.—

We hold our intention of seeing France, but expect to see you here first, as we do not go till the 20th of next month. A steam boat goes to Dieppe, I see.—

Christie has not sent to me, and I suppose is in no hurry to settle the account. I think in a day or two (if I do not hear from you to the contrary) I shall refresh his memory.

I am sorry I made you pay for two Letters. I Peated it, and re-peated it.

Miss Wright is married, and I am a hamper in her debt, which I hope will now not be remembered. She is in great good humour, I hear, and yet out of spirits.

Where shall I get such full flavor'd Geneva again!

Old Mr. Henshaw died last night precisely at ½ past 11.— He has been open'd by desire of Mrs. McKenna; and, where his heart should have been, was found a stone. Poor Arnold is inconsolable; and, not having shaved since, looks deplorable.

With our kind remembᶜᵉˢ. to Caroline and your friends

We remain yours affectionately C. L. AND M. LAMB.

[*Occupying the entire margin up the left-hand side of the letter is, in Mary Lamb's hand:*]

I thank you for your kind letter, and owe you one in return, but Charles is in such a hurry to send this to be franked

Your affecᵃᵗᵉ sister

M. LAMB.

[*On the right-hand margin, beside the paragraph about Mr. Henshaw, is written in the same hand, underlined:*]

He is not dead.

[John Lamb's widow had a married daughter, probably the Caroline referred to, a Mrs. Dowden. The letter treats of family matters, which could not now be explained even if it were worth while. The Lambs were arranging a visit to Versailles, to the Kenneys. Mr. Henshaw was Lamb's godfather, a gunsmith, but he did not die till 28th July 1822, in his hundredth year.]

423. TO CHARLES OLLIER

[No date: *End of August 1822.*]

DEAR OLLIER,

I have received one or two presents of books from authors, which I can only return *in kind*. Can you let me have 3 or 4 copies of my *Works* for that purpose

Yours &c

C. LAMB.

I have been in France
I have eaten frogs.
Poor Percy Bishe!!

Have you done with my old copy of *Don Quixote*?

[One of the immediate recipients of the *Works* was Bernard Barton, to the beginning of whose long correspondence with Lamb we are about to come. He has written in his copy:

Presented me by the Author 8/28th 1822 on which day I dined and drank tea with Him, at his lodgings 20 Great Russell St., Covent Garden.

'Poor Percy Bishe.' This is a reference to Shelley's drowning, off Lerici, on 8th July 1822.

The Lambs went to France in the summer of 1822, sailing from Brighton to Dieppe in the company of a Frenchman named Guichy or Guichet, and probably an attendant for Mary Lamb, who, as it happened, was taken ill on the road, at Amiens, and remained there to be nursed, while Lamb and Guichy went on alone. Lamb stayed at the Hôtel de l'Europe in the Rue Valois, since pulled down and rebuilt. He also visited the Kenneys at Versailles, with whom, when she was well enough to leave Amiens, Mary Lamb stayed. Crabb Robinson was then in Paris too, and also Mrs. Aders, and Foss, the bookseller of Pall Mall who had married Miss Burney, and his brother.]

424. TO JOHN CLARE

India House, *31 Aug.*, *1822.*

DEAR CLARE,

I thank you heartily for your present. I am an inveterate old Londoner, but while I am among your choice collections, I seem

to be native to them, and free of the country. The quantity of your observation has astonished me. What have most pleased me have been Recollections after a Ramble, and those Grongar Hill kind of pieces in eight syllable lines, my favourite measure, such as Cowper Hill and Solitude. In some of your story-telling Ballads the provincial phrases sometimes startle me. I think you are too profuse with them. In poetry *slang* of every kind is to be avoided. There is a rustick Cockneyism, as little pleasing as ours of London. Transplant Arcadia to Helpstone. The true rustic style, the Arcadian English, I think is to be found in Shenstone. Would his Schoolmistress, the prettiest of poems, have been better, if he had used quite the Goody's own language? Now and then a home rusticism is fresh and startling, but where nothing is gained in expression, it is out of tenor. It may make folks smile and stare, but the ungenial coalition of barbarous with refined phrases will prevent you in the end from being so generally tasted, as you deserve to be. Excuse my freedom, and take the same liberty with my *puns*.

I send you two little volumes of my spare hours. They are of all sorts, there is a methodist hymn for Sundays, and a farce for Saturday night. Pray give them a place on your shelf. Pray accept a little volume, of which I have [a] duplicate, that I may return in equal number to your welcome presents.

I think I am indebted to you for a sonnet in the London for August.

Since I saw you I have been in France, and have eaten frogs. The nicest little rabbity things you ever tasted. Do look about for them. Make Mrs. Clare pick off the hind quarters, boil them plain, with parsley and butter. The fore quarters are not so good. She may let them hop off by themselves.

Yours sincerely, CHAS. LAMB.

[The sonnet in the August *London Magazine* was not signed by Clare. It runs thus:

TO ELIA

ELIA, thy reveries and vision'd themes
To Care's lorn heart a luscious pleasure prove;
Wild as the mystery of delightful dreams,
Soft as the anguish of remember'd love:

Like records of past days their memory dances
Mid the cool feelings Manhood's reason brings,
As the unearthly visions of romances
Peopled with sweet and uncreated things;—
And yet thy themes thy gentle worth enhances!
Then wake again thy wild harp's tenderest strings,
Sing on, sweet Bard, let fairy loves again
Smile in thy dreams, with angel ecstacies;
Bright o'er our souls will break the heavenly strain
Through the dull gloom of earth's realities.

Clare addressed to Lamb another sonnet on his *Dramatic Specimens* which was printed in Hone's *Year Book* in 1831, and ran thus:

To CHARLES LAMB, Esq.

Friend LAMB, thy choice was good, to love the lore
Of our old by-gone bards, whose racy page
Rich mellowing Time makes sweeter than before
The blossom left—for the long garner'd store
Of fruitage, now right luscious in its age,
Although to fashion's taste austere,—what more
Can be expected from the popular rage
For tinsel gauds that are to gold preferred?
Me much it grieves, as I did erst presage
Vain fashion's foils had every heart deterred
From the warm, homely phrase of other days,
Until thy Woodvil's ancient voice I heard;
And now right fain, yet fearing, honest bard,
I pause to greet thee with so poor a praise.

Lamb's return gift was his *Works*.
The little volume was *Tracts*, by Sir Thomas Browne.
'Welcome gifts.' Clare had sent his *Poems Descriptive of Rural Life and Scenery*, 1820, and *The Village Minstrel*, 2 vols., 1821.]

425. TO MARY LAMB (in Paris)
(*Fragment*)

[*August 1822.*]

Then you must walk all along the Borough side of the Seine facing the Tuileries. There is a mile and a half of print shops and book stalls. If the latter were but English. Then there is a place where the Paris people put all their dead people and bring

em flowers and dolls and ginger bread nuts and sonnets and such trifles. And that is all I think worth seeing as sights, except that the streets and shops of Paris are themselves the best sight.

426. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

DEAR A., [*5th September 1822.*]

A dim notion dawns upon my drunken caput, that last night you made an engagement for me at your house on Monday; it may be all a fiction; but if you did, pray change it to some *Evening* between that day and Saturday—not *Saturday*.

It is impossible for me to come on Monday.

If it is all delusion, forgive the harmless vanity.

I want that magazine you took away, if *you* took it.

This is a mere hypothetical Epistle.

C. LAMB.

Thursday, some day in Sept.

427. TO MRS. JAMES KENNEY AND MISS SOPHY KENNEY

DEAR MRS. K., London, *September 11, 1822.*

Mary got home safe on Friday night. She has suffered only a common fatigue, but as she is weakly, begs me to thank you in both our names for all the trouble she has been to you. She did not succeed in saving Robinson's fine waistcoat. They could not comprehend how a waistcoat, marked Henry Robinson, could be a part of Miss Lamb's wearing apparel. So they seized it for the king, who will probably appear in it at the next levee. Next to yourself, our best thanks to H. Payne. I was disappointed he came not with her. Tell Kenney the Cow has got out, by composition, paying so much in the pound. The canary bird continues her sleep-persuading strains. Pray say to Ellen that I think the verses very pretty which she slipt into my pocket on the last day of my being at Versailles. The stanzas on Ambition are fine, allowing for the age of the writer. The thought that the present King of Spain whom I suppose she

means by the 'brown monarch,' sitting in state among his grandees, is like

A sparrow lonely on the house's top,

is perhaps a little forced. The next line is better,

Too high to stoop, though not afraid to drop.

Pray deliver what follows to my dear wife Sophy.

MY DEAR SOPHY,

The few short days of connubial felicity which I passed with you among the pears and apricots of Versailles were some of the happiest of my life. But they are flown!

And your other half—your dear co-twin—that she-you—that almost equal sharer of my affections: you and she are my better half, a quarter a-piece. She and you are my pretty sixpence—you the head, and she the tail. Sure, Heaven that made you so alike must pardon the error of an inconsiderate moment, should I for love of you, love her too well. Do you think laws were made for lovers? I think not.

Adieu, amiable Pair, Yours and yours C. LAMB.

P.S.—I enclose half a dear kiss a-piece for you.

[Mrs. Kenney, *née* Louise Mercier, a French woman, before her marriage to James Kenney, the dramatist, had been the wife of Thomas Holcroft, also a dramatist. There were thus two families at Versailles. Ellen, Betsy, Sophia, and her twin sister Louisa were Holcrofts; the youngest Kenney at the time was Charles Lamb Kenney, born 1821.

'H. Payne.' John Howard Payne. See note on page 357.

'In the pound.' A very characteristic pun.

'Sleep-persuading strains.' From Coleridge: 'Otter's sleep-persuading stream,' in the *Songs of the Pixies*.]

428. TO BERNARD BARTON

India House, *11 Sept. 1822.*

DEAR SIR,

You have misapprehended me sadly, if you suppose that I meant to impute any inconsistency (in your writing poetry) with your religious profession. I do not remember what I said, but it was spoken sportively, I am sure. One of my levities, which you

are not so used to as my older friends. I probably was thinking of the light in which your so indulging yourself would appear to *Quakers*, and put their objection in my own foolish mouth. I would eat my words (provided they should be written on not very coarse paper) rather than I would throw cold water upon your, and my once, harmless occupation. I have read Napoleon and the rest with delight. I like them for what they are, and for what they are not. I have sickened on the modern rhodomontade & Byronism, and your plain Quakerish Beauty has captivated me. It is all wholesome cates, aye, and toothsome too, and withal Quakerish. If I were George Fox, and George Fox Licenser of the Press, they should have my absolute IMPRIMATUR. I hope I have removed the impression.

I am, like you, a prisoner to the desk. I have been chained to that gally thirty years, a long shot. I have almost grown to the wood. If no imaginative poet, I am sure I am a figurative one. Do 'Friends' allow puns? *verbal* equivocations? they are unjustly accused of it, and I did my little best in the 'imperfect Sympathies' to vindicate them.

I am very tired of clerking it, but have no remedy. Did you see a sonnet to this purpose in the Examiner?

> *Who* first invented Work—and tied the free
> And holy-day rejoycing spirit down
> To the ever-haunting importunity
> Of business, in the green fields, and the town—
> To plough—loom—anvil—spade—&, oh, most sad,
> To this dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
> Who but the Being Unblest, alien from good,
> Sabbathless Satan! he who his unglad
> Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,
> That round and round incalculably reel—
> For wrath Divine hath made him like a wheel—
> In that red realm from whence are no returnings;
> Where toiling and turmoiling ever and aye
> He, and his Thoughts, keep pensive worky-day.
>
> C. L.

I fancy the sentiment exprest above will be nearly your own, the expression of it probably would not so well suit with a follower of John Woolman. But I do not know whether diabolism is a part of your creed, or where indeed to find an exposition of your

creed at all. In feelings and matters not dogmatical, I hope I am half a Quaker.—Believe me, with great respect, yours

C. LAMB.

I shall always be happy to see, or hear from you.—

[This is the first of the letters—all, with one or two exceptions, now preserved in the British Museum—to Bernard Barton (1784–1849), a clerk in a bank at Woodbridge, in Suffolk, who was known as the Quaker Poet, and was a contributor to the *London Magazine*. Lamb, entertaining him in Russell Street, had apparently said something about Quakers and poetry which Barton, on thinking it over, had taken too seriously. Barton was already the author of four volumes of poetry, of which *Napoleon and Other Poems* was the latest, published in 1822. Lamb's essay on 'Imperfect Sympathies' had been printed in the *London Magazine* for August 1821. For John Woolman, see note to the letter to Coleridge of 5th February 1797. The sonnet, *Work*, had been printed in the *Examiner*, 29th August 1819.]

429. TO BARRON FIELD

MY DEAR F., *Sept. 22, 1822.*

I scribble hastily at office. Frank wants my letter presently. I & sister are just returned from Paris!! We have eaten frogs. It has been such a treat! You know our monotonous general Tenor. Frogs are the nicest little delicate things—rabbity-flavoured. Imagine a Lilliputian rabbit! They fricassee them; but in my mind, drest seethed, plain, with parsley and butter, would have been the decision of Apicius. Shelley the great Atheist has gone down by water to eternal fire! Hunt and his young fry are left stranded at Pisa, to be adopted by the remaining duumvir, Lord Byron—his wife and 6 children & their maid. What a cargo of Jonases, if they had foundered too! The only use I can find of friends, is that they do to borrow money of you. Henceforth I will consort with none but rich rogues. Paris is a glorious picturesque old City. London looks mean and New to it, as the town of Washington would, seen after *it*. But they have no St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. The Seine, so much despised by Cockneys, is exactly the size to run thro' a magnificent street; palaces a mile long on one side, lofty Edinbro' stone (O the glorious antiques!): houses on the other. The Thames disunites London & Southwark. I had Talma to supper with

me. He has picked up, as I believe, an authentic portrait of Shakspere. He paid a broker about £40 English for it. It is painted on the one half of a pair of bellows—a lovely picture, corresponding with the Folio head. The bellows has old carved *wings* round it, and round the visnomy is inscribed, near as I remember, not divided into rhyme—I found out the rhyme—

Whom have we here,
Stuck on this bellows,
But the Prince of good fellows,
Willy Shakspere?

At top—

O base and coward luck!
To be here stuck.—POINS.

At bottom—

Nay! rather a glorious lot is to him assign'd,
Who, like the Almighty, rides upon the *wind*.—PISTOL.

This is all in old carved wooden letters. The countenance smiling, sweet, and intellectual beyond measure, even as He was immeasurable. It may be a forgery. They laugh at me and tell me Ireland is in Paris, and has been putting off a portrait of the Black Prince. How far old wood may be imitated I cannot say. Ireland was not found out by his parchments, but by his poetry. I am confident no painter on either side the Channel could have painted any thing near like the face I saw. Again, would such a painter and forger have expected £40 for a thing, if authentic, worth £4000? Talma is not in the secret, for he had not even found out the rhymes in the first inscription. He is coming over with it, and, my life to Southey's Thalaba, it will gain universal faith.

The letter is wanted, and I am wanted. Imagine the blank filled up with all kind things.

Our joint hearty remembrances to both of you. Yours as ever,

C. LAMB.

[Frank was Francis John Field, Barron Field's brother, in the India House.

'The only use I can find of friends.' This transition might suggest that Leigh Hunt had applied to Lamb for a loan.

Talma was François Joseph Talma (1763–1826), the great French tragedian. Lamb, introduced by John Howard Payne, saw him in *Regulus*, but not under-

standing French was but mildly interested. 'Ah,' said Talma in the account by James Kenney printed in Henry Angelo's *Pic-Nic*, 'I was not very happy to-night; you must see me in *Scylla*.' 'Incidit in Scyllam,' said Lamb, 'qui vult vitare Charybdim.' 'Ah, you are a rogue; you are a great rogue,' was Talma's reply. Talma had bought a pair of bellows with Shakespeare's head on it. Lamb's belief in the authenticity of this portrait was misplaced, as the following account from *Chambers's Journal* for 27th September 1856 will show:

> About the latter part of the last century, one Zincke, an artist of little note, but grandson of the celebrated enameller of that name, manufactured fictitious Shakespeares by the score. . . . The most famous of Zincke's productions is the well-known Talma Shakespeare, which gentle Charles Lamb made a pilgrimage to Paris to see; and when he did see, knelt down and kissed with idolatrous veneration. Zincke painted it on a larger panel than was necessary for the size of the picture, and then cut away the superfluous wood, so as to leave the remainder in the shape of a pair of bellows. . . . Zincke probably was thinking of 'a muse of fire' when he adopted this strange method of raising the wind; but he made little by it, for the dealer into whose hands the picture passed, sold it as a curiosity, not an original portrait, for £5. The buyer, being a person of ingenuity, and fonder of money than curiosities, fabricated a series of letters to and from Sir Kenelm Digby, and, passing over to France, *planted*—the slang term used among the less honest of the curiosity-dealing fraternity—the picture and the letters in an old château near Paris. Of course a confederate managed to discover the *plant*, in the presence of witnesses, and great was the excitement that ensued. Sir Kenelm Digby had been in France in the reign of Charles I, and the fictitious correspondence *proved* that the picture was an original, and had been painted by Queen Elizabeth's command, on the lid of her favourite pair of bellows!
>
> It really would seem that the more absurd a deception is, the better it succeeds. All Paris was in delight at possessing an original Shakespeare, while the London amateurs were in despair at such a treasure being lost to England. The ingenious person soon found a purchaser, and a high price recompensed him for his trouble. But more remains to be told. The happy purchaser took his treasure to Ribet, the first Parisian picture-cleaner of the day, to be cleaned. Ribet set to work; but we may fancy his surprise as the superficial *impasto* of Zincke washed off beneath the sponge, and Shakespeare became a female in a lofty headgear adorned with blue ribbons.
>
> In a furious passion the purchaser ran to the seller. 'Let us talk over the affair quietly,' said the latter; 'I have been cheated as well as you: let us keep the matter secret; if we let the public know it, all Paris and even London too, will be laughing at us. I will return you your money, and take back the picture, if you will employ Ribet to restore it to the same condition as it was in when you received it.' This fair proposition was acceded to, and Ribet restored the picture; but as he was a superior artist to Zincke, he greatly improved it, and this improvement was attributed to his skill as a cleaner. The secret being kept, and the picture, improved by cleaning, being again

in the market, Talma, the great tragedian, purchased it at even a higher price than that given by the first buyer. Talma valued it highly, enclosed it in a case of morocco and gold, and subsequently refused 1,000 napoleons for it; and even when at last its whole history was disclosed, he still cherished it as a genuine memorial of the great bard.

I quote the following final passage from the *Courier* of Friday, 14th September 1827:

TALMA'S 'BELLOWS' PORTRAIT. Previous to the death of Mons. Talma, he was, on more occasions than one, made acquainted with the spurious origin of this picture, for which, conceiving it to be an original portrait of Shakespeare, he gave £200. He would not, however, credit the fact of the fabrication, until a short time before his final illness, when, it seems, he became aware of it. On the disposal of his property, all the Parisian fashionables attended; the grand object of attraction, being the *Bellows Picture*. During the sale, it was stated that the painter was a Flemish artist, of the name of Porbus; that Talma had refused a thousand Napoleons for the portrait; and that on one occasion, when he had been visited by Mr. Charles Lamb, the latter being shown the picture, fell upon his knees and kissed it with idolatrous veneration. This dexterous forgery was knocked down at 3,100 francs—about £130 *sterling*.]

430. TO J. A. HESSEY

DEAR H., [Dated at end: *30th September 1822*.]

I accept the invitat^n & acknowledge the £20 with many thanks. In violent haste.

C. L.

I will think on 12th Night.

[I cannot find that Lamb ever wrote an essay on Twelfth Night, either the day or the play, although there was much about Malvolio in his paper on the Old Actors in May of this year; but he wrote for the *London Magazine*, January 1823: 'Rejoicings upon the New Year's Coming of Age' where all the red-letter days are mentioned.]

431. TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

DEAR PAYNE, [*Autumn 1822*.]

A friend and fellow-clerk of mine, Mr. White (a good fellow) coming to your parts, I would fain have accompanied him, but am forced instead to send a part of me, verse and prose, most of it

from 20 to 30 years old, such as I then was, and I am not much altered.

Paris, which I hardly knew whether I liked when I was in it, is an object of no small magnitude with me now. I want to be going, to the Jardin des Plantes (is that right, Louisa?) with you —to Pere de la Chaise, La Morgue, and all the sentimentalities. How is Talma, and his (my) dear Shakspeare?

N.B.—My friend White knows Paris thoroughly, and does not want a guide. We did, and had one. We both join in thanks. Do you remember a Blue-Silk Girl (English) at the Luxembourg, that did not much seem to attend to the Pictures, who fell in love with you, and whom I fell in love with—an inquisitive, prying, curious Beauty—where is she?

Votre Très Humble Serviteur,

CHARLOIS AGNEAU,

alias C. LAMB.

Guichy is well, and much as usual. He seems blind to all the distinctions of life, except to those of sex. Remembrance to Kenny and Poole.

[John Howard Payne (1792–1852), who was born in New York, began life as an actor in 1809 as Young Norval in *Douglas*, and made his English début in 1813 in the same part. For several years he lived either in London or Paris, where among his friends were Washington Irving and Talma. He wrote a number of plays, and in one of them, *Clari, or the Maid of Milan*, is the song *Home, Sweet Home*, with Bishop's music, on which his immortality rests. Payne died in Tunis, where he was American Consul, in 1852, and when in 1883 he was re-interred at Washington, it was as the author of *Home, Sweet Home*. He seems to have been a charming but ill-starred man, whom to know was to love.

White was Edward White of the India House, by whom Lamb probably sent a copy of the 1818 edition of his *Works*. Louisa was Louisa Holcroft. Poole was John Poole, the dramatist, author of burlesque plays in the *London Magazine*, and later of *Paul Pry*.]

432. TO BERNARD BARTON

[Dated at end: *9th October 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

I am asham'd not sooner to have acknowledged your letter and poem. I think the latter very temperate, very serious and very

seasonable. I do not think it will convert the club at Pisa, neither do I think it will satisfy the bigots on our side the water. Something like a parody on the song of Ariel would please them better.

> Full fathom five the Atheist lies,
> Of his bones are hell-dice made.—

I want time, or fancy, to fill up the rest.—I sincerely sympathise with you on your doleful confinement. Of Time, Health, and Riches, the first in order is not last in excellence. Riches are chiefly good, because they give us Time. What a weight of wearisome prison hours have [I] to look back and forward to, as quite cut out [of] life—and the sting of the thing is, that for six hours every day I have no business which I could not contract into two, if they would let me work Taskwork. I shall be glad to hear that your grievance is mitigated.

Shelly I saw once. His voice was the most obnoxious squeak I ever was tormented with, ten thousand times worse than the Laureat's, whose voice is the worst part about him except his Laureatcy. Lord Byron opens upon him on Monday in a Parody (I suppose) of the 'Vision of Judgment,' in which latter the Poet I think did not much show *his*. To award his Heaven and his Hell in the presumptuous manner he has done, was a piece of immodesty as bad as Shelleyism.

I am returning a poor letter. I was formerly a great Scribbler in that way, but my hand is out of order. If I said my head too, I should not be very much out, but I will tell no tales of myself. I will therefore end (after my best thanks, with a hope to see you again some time in London), begging you to accept this Letteret for a Letter—a Leveret makes a better present than a grown hare, and short troubles (as the old excuse goes) are best.

I hear that C. Lloyd is well, and has returned to his family. I think this will give you pleasure to hear.

I remain, dear Sir, yours truly C. LAMB.

E. I. H.

9 Oct. 22.

[Barton had just published his *Verses on the Death of P. B. Shelley*, a lament for misapplied genius. 'The club at Pisa' referred particularly to Byron, Leigh Hunt, and Trelawny. Trelawny placed three lines from Ariel's song in *The*

Tempest on Shelley's monument; but whether Lamb knew this, or his choice of rival lines is a coincidence, I do not know. Trelawny chose the lines:

> Nothing of him that doth fade
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.

There is no other record of Lamb's meeting with Shelley, who, by the way, admired Lamb's writings warmly. 'What a lovely thing,' he wrote to Leigh Hunt, 'is his *Rosamund Gray*, how much knowledge of the sweetest and deepest parts of our nature is in it!' In another letter Shelley regrets that the 'calumny of an enemy' had kept him and Lamb apart.

Byron's *Vision of Judgment*, a burlesque of Southey's poem of the same name, was printed in *The Liberal* for 1822.]

433. TO BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

India House, *9th October*, 1822.

DEAR HAYDON,

Poor Godwin has been turned out of his house and business in Skinner Street, and if he does not pay two years' arrears of rent, he will have the whole stock, furniture, &c., of his new house (in the Strand) seized when term begins. We are trying to raise a subscription for him. My object in writing this is simply to ask you, if this is a kind of case which would be likely to interest Mrs. Coutts in his behalf; and *who* in your opinion is the best person to speak with her on his behalf. Without the aid of from £300 to £400 by that time, early in November, he must be ruined. You are the only person I can think of, of her acquaintance, and can, perhaps, if not yourself, recommend the person most likely to influence her. Shelley had engaged to clear him of all demands, and he has gone down to the deep insolvent.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Is Sir Walter to be applied to, and by what channel?

[Mrs. Coutts was probably Harriot Mellon, the actress, widow of the banker, Thomas Coutts, and afterwards Duchess of St. Albans. She had played the part of the heroine Melesinda in *Mr. H.*

I should say here that in 1823 Lamb was mainly instrumental in putting on foot a fund for Godwin's benefit. He transformed his loan of £50 into a

gift. An appeal was issued asking for £600, the following postscript to which, in Lamb's hand, is preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum:

There are few circumstances belonging to the case which are not sufficiently adverted to in the above letter.

Mr. Godwin's opponent declares himself determined to act against him with the last degree of hostility: the law gives him the power the first week in November to seize upon Mr. Godwin's property, furniture, books, &c., together with all his present sources of income for the support of himself and his family. Mr. Godwin has at this time made considerable progress in a work of great research, and requiring all the powers of his mind, to the completion of which he had looked for future pecuniary advantage. His mind is at this moment so entirely occupied in this work, that he feels within himself the firmness and resolution that no *prospect* of evil or calamity shall draw him off from it or suspend his labours. But *the calamity itself*, if permitted to arrive, will produce the physical impossibility for him to proceed. His books and the materials of his work, as well as his present sources of income, will be taken from him. Those materials have been the collection of several years, and it would require a long time to replace them, if they could ever be replaced.

The favour of an early answer is particularly requested, that the extent of the funds supplied may as soon as possible be ascertained, particularly as any aid, however kindly intended, will, after the lapse of a very few weeks, become useless to the purpose in view.

The signatories to the appeal were: Crabb Robinson (£30), William Ayrton (£10), John Murray (£10 10s.), Charles Lamb (£50), Lord Francis Leveson-Gower (£10), Lord Dudley (£50), the Hon. W. Lamb (£20), and Sir James Mackintosh (£10). Other contributions were: Lord Byron, £26 5*s*.; T. M. Alsager, £10; and 'A B C, by Charles Lamb,' £10. A B C was Sir Walter Scott.]

434. TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

Thursday, [*22nd October*] 1822.

'Ali Pacha' will do. I sent my sister the first night, not having been able to go myself, and her report of its effect was most favourable. I saw it last night—the third night—and it was most satisfactorily received. I have been sadly disappointed in Talfourd, who does the critiques in the 'Times,' and who promised his strenuous services; but by some damn'd arrangement he was sent to the wrong house, and a most iniquitous account of Ali substituted for his, which I am sure would have been a kind one. The 'Morning Herald' did it ample justice, without appearing to puff it. It is an abominable misrepresentation of

the 'Times,' that Farren played Ali like Lord Ogilby. He acted infirmity of body, but not of voice or purpose. His manner was even grand. A grand old gentleman. His falling to the earth when his son's death was announced was fine as anything I ever saw. It was as if he had been blasted. Miss Foote looked helpless and beautiful, and greatly helped the piece. It is going on steadily, I am sure, for *many nights*. Marry, I was a little disappointed with Hassan, who tells us he subsists by cracking court jests before Hali, but he made none. In all the rest, scenery and machinery, it was faultless. I hope it will bring you here. I should be most glad of that. I have a room for you, and you shall order your own dinner three days in the week. I must retain my own authority for the rest. As far as magazines go, I can answer for Talfourd in the 'New Monthly.' He cannot be put out there. But it is established as a favourite, and can do without these expletives. I long to talk over with you the Shakspeare Picture. My doubts of its being a forgery mainly rest upon the goodness of the picture. The bellows might be trumped up, but where did the painter spring from? Is Ireland a consummate artist—or any of Ireland's accomplices?—but we shall confer upon it, I hope. The 'New Times,' I understand was favorable to 'Ali,' but I have not seen it. I am sensible of the want of method in this letter, but I have been deprived of the connecting organ, by a practice I have fallen into since I left Paris, of taking too much strong spirits of a night. I must return to the Hotel de l'Europe and Macon.

How is Kenney? Have you seen my friend White? What is Poole about, &c.? Do not write, but come and answer me.

The weather is charming, and there is a mermaid to be seen in London. You may not have the opportunity of inspecting such a *Poisarde* once again in ten centuries.

My sister joins me in the hope of seeing you.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[*Ali Pacha*, a melodrama in two acts, was produced at Covent Garden on 19th October 1822. It ran altogether sixteen nights. William Farren played the hero. Lord Ogleby, an antiquated fop, is a character in *The Clandestine Marriage* by Colman and Garrick. Miss Foote played Helena.

The following letter from Payne to Lamb crossed Lamb's:

Paris, *6th October 1822.*

MY DEAR SIR,

I this moment learn that a piece of mine upon which I never built anything like a hope, is accepted and to come out immediately at Covent Garden. It is what I mentioned when you were here—*Ali Pacha.* I am rather sorry that my connection with that house should begin with such a trifle—but if you have the power to make it better thought of among your critical friends than it deserves, it may get me a footing where I may be treated less ungratefully than I was by Elliston. Should my first attempt in the rival house fail, I may lose that and find it hard to regain the other. The history of the affair is simply this: Bishop, the composer, was over here, and asked me if I had anything by me. I replied I had a trifling piece which he might take on the venture. He went back, and immediately sent me word (30th September) that the scenery was in great forwardness and the drama would be out in ten days. So I have promised him another in ten days more. 'I can be moved as quickly as another in a good cause.'

The piece in question would have a chance if acted by powerful speakers. It has not enough action for a melodramatic company. The Covent Garden managers, I fear, will put their mere posture masters in it, who will gesticulate my sentences, not being able to speak them. All the better for the hearers perhaps.

I have found out that Talma's picture of Shakespeare is a counterfeit, manufactured in London by a man who has made a great deal of money by various readings of the same text, *all* 'the only genuine.'

Should the result of my playhouse experiment disappoint my fears, I may have the pleasure of thanking you in London for the flattering kindness with which you have remembered me in your letters.

Pray offer my best regards to Miss Lamb, and tell her I wish I may succeed, for the sake of overcoming the resolution she seemed to take when we last supped together, of dying without seeing me again.

My respects to Miss James; and to Mr. Guichet, the Pensive (as I learn there is a Gay Guichet on the town, whose boisterous mirth made Kenney almost like the other by comparison), and pray tell him that Louis XVIII begins to put restrictions on the priests. He has lately forbidden them to wear straw hats. This fastidiousness looks ill for popery. Guichet the Pensive will drink to Louis le Désiré.

I expect to see the Kenny's to-day; I shall present the compliments you mean to send in answer to this letter.

Believe me, my dear Sir, Yours ever faithfully

J. H. P.

P.S. I have not a sheet of paper in my palace. Pray excuse this. I will send the other part when I write again.

A few days later Lamb's letter of 22nd October (and possibly that numbered 431) arrived, and here is Payne's reply:

Paris, *28th October 1822.*

Charles Lamb, Esq.
20 Russell Street, Covent Garden,
LONDON.

Many thanks for your letters. I was sorry I had troubled you with the one to which you reply and would fain have recalled it. It relieves me infinitely to find it gave no annoyance. The former letter arrived a few days before. I think the better of you for your books, and the better of myself for your attention. In the year 1806, when I edited a little paper at a Grammar School in the interior of America, I quoted some of the poetry in the first volume, never, till now, having been aware who was the author.

My extracts were from a manuscript collection. I then praised the scrap entitled *Childhood* most earnestly. Then I was sixteen years nearer to the feelings it describes than I now am. They were anxious for the books at Kenney's. Louisa instantly put them under shelter from the young barbarians in a nice white paper cover. Both volumes disappeared presently. Ellen was missing at the same time. That night she repeated all *John Woodvill* to her mother; and next morning half of *Rosamund Gray* in French was found under her mattress. The interest of *Rosamund Gray* appears to me the most inobtrusive and intense I know of. Some of Mackenzie's stories try for the same effect, but this has a deeper character.

Is it not teasing that I should not have heard a syllable from the theatre? They wrote to know what I would take *down* for *Ali Pacha* and other pieces. I named my price. They give me no reply, but act *Ali*, alter it, and put another person's name to it. They wait for the prize before they buy the lottery ticket, and will no doubt insist that they *would* have paid just the same, if it had drawn a blank. 'Would' is 'if's' twin brother in peace making. . . . I am innocent of Hassan's broken threat to be funny. So I am of the fine effect for which you praise Farren. I think *that* must be his own. It smacks of the stage. It would be better anywhere than in *Ali*. Ali was remarkable for utter want of natural affection. I had made him say on hearing of his sons' death, 'Go, tell it to their mother that she may weep for them.' The actors, by falsifying this *trait*, and perhaps others, have made the critics blame me for having humanized a brute. Richard might as well have fainted at the children's murder in the tower. . . .

Poole is, as usual, laughing at others and lamenting for himself. Kenney stays at Versailles, writing love songs and acting the enraged musician to his noisy children. He locks himself in, three doors deep. Mrs. Kenney is jealous of your having written to me and not to them. She says she should hate her cat if she thought it purred louder for another. Her jealousy is worth having. The Blue Girl has never been since. She disappeared in despair at not discovering your name. . . .

With best remembrance to Miss Lamb, believe me,
Yours ever faithfully

J. H. P.]

435. BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON

Tuesday, 29th [October 1822].

DEAR H.,

I have written a very respectful letter to Sir W. S. Godwin did not write, because he leaves all to his committee, as I will explain to you. If this rascally weather holds, you will see but one of us on that day.

Yours, with many thanks

C. LAMB.

436. TO SIR WALTER SCOTT

East India House, London,
29th October 1822.

DEAR SIR,

I have to acknowledge your kind attention to my application to Mr. Haydon. I have transmitted your draft to Mr. G[odwin]'s committee as an anonymous contribution through me. Mr. Haydon desires his thanks and best respects to you, but was desirous that I should write to you on this occasion. I cannot pass over your kind expressions as to myself. It is not likely that I shall ever find myself in Scotland, but should the event ever happen, I should be proud to pay my respects to you in your own land. My disparagement of heaths and highlands—if I said any such thing in half earnest,—you must put down as a piece of the old Vulpine policy. I must make the most of the spot I am chained to, and console myself for my flat destiny as well as I am able. I know very well our mole-hills are not mountains, but I must cocker them up and make them look as big and as handsome as I can, that we may both be satisfied. Allow me to express the pleasure I feel on an occasion given me of writing to you, and to subscribe myself, dear sir, your obliged and respectful servant,

CHARLES LAMB.

[See note on the letter to Godwin above. Lamb and Scott had met in Haydon's studio in March 1821. Hazlitt, Wilkie, and Procter were also there, and Talfourd tells us that Lamb 'used to speak with gratitude and pleasure of the circumstances under which he saw him once in Fleet Street. A man, in the dress of a mechanic, stopped him just at Inner Temple Gate and said, touching his hat, "I beg your pardon, sir, but perhaps you would like to see

Sir Walter Scott; that is he just crossing the road"; and Lamb stammered out his hearty thanks to his truly humane informer.'

Andrew Lang discovered that in 1818 or thereabouts Sir Walter invited Lamb to Abbotsford.

'Vulpine policy.' Referring to the fable of the fox and the grapes.]

437. TO THOMAS ROBINSON

[Dated at end: *11th November 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

We have to thank you, or Mrs. Robinson—for I think her name was on the direction—for the best pig, which myself, the warmest of pig-lovers, ever tasted. The dressing and the sauce were pronounced incomparable by two friends, who had the good fortune to drop in to dinner yesterday, but I must not mix up my cook's praises with my acknowledgments; let me but have leave to say that she and we did your pig justice. I should dilate on the crackling—done to a turn—but I am afraid Mrs. Clarkson, who, I hear, is with you, will set me down as an Epicure. Let it suffice, that you have spoil'd my appetite for boiled mutton for some time to come. Your brother Henry partook of the cold relics—by which he might give a good guess at what it had been *hot*.

With our thanks, pray convey our kind respects to Mrs. Robinson, and the Lady before mentioned.

Your obliged Sert

CHARLES LAMB.

India House
11 Nov. 22.

[This letter is addressed to 'R. Robinson, Esq., Bury, Suffolk,' but I think there is no doubt that the recipient was Thomas Robinson of Bury St. Edmunds, Crabb Robinson's brother. Lamb's 'Dissertation on Roast Pig' had been printed in the *London Magazine* in September 1822, and this pig was one of the first of many such gifts that came to him.]

438. TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

Wensd. 13 Nov. 22.

DEAR P.,

Owing to the inconvenience of having two lodgings I did not get your letter quite so soon as I should. The India Ho. is my proper address where I am sure for the forepart of every day. The

instant I got it, I addrest a letter, for Kemble to see, to my friend Henry Robertson, the Treasurer of Covent Garden Theatre. He had a conference with Kemble, and the result is, that Robertson in the name of the management, recognized to me the full ratifying of your bargain £250 for Ali, the Slaves, & another piece which they have not received. He assures me that the whole will be paid you, or the proportion for the two former, as soon as ever the Treasury will permit it. He offered to write the same to you, if I pleased. He thinks in a month or two they will be able to liquidate it. He is positive no trick could be meant you, as Mr. Planché's alterations, which were trifling, were not at all considered as affecting your bargain. With respect to the copyright of Ali, he was of opinion no money would be given for it, as Ali is quite laid aside. This explanation being given, you would not think of printing the two copies together by way of recommendation. He told me the secret of the Two Galley Slaves at Drury Lane. Elliston, if he is informed right, engaged Poole to translate it, but before Poole's translation arrived, finding it coming out at Cov. Gar. he procured copies of two translations of it in London. So you see here are four translat[ns] reckoning yours. I fear no copyright could be got for it, for anybody may print it & nobody has done it. Yours has run 7 nights and R. is of opinion it will not exceed in number of nights the nights of Ali, about thirteen. But your full right to your bargain with the Managem[t]. is in the fullest manner recognized by him officially. He gave me every hope the money will be paid as soon they can spare it. He said a month *or two* but seem'd to mean about *a month*. A new Lady is coming out in *Juliet*, to whom they look very confidently for replenishing their Treasury. Robertson is a very good fellow, and I can rely upon his statement. Should you have any more pieces & want to get a copyright for them, I am the worst person to negotiate with any Bookseller, having been cheated by all I have had to do with (except Taylor & Hessey—but they do not publish theatrical pieces) & I know not how to go about it or who to apply to. But if you have no better negotiator, I should know the minimum you expect, for I should not like to make a bargain of my own head, being (after the Duke of Wellington) the worst of all negotiators.

I find from Robertson you have written to Bishop on the subject. Have you nam'd anything of the copyright of the Slaves? R. thinks no publisher would pay for it, and you would not risque it on your own accot.

This is a mere letter of business—so I will just send my love to my little wife at Versailles, to her dear mother, &c.

Believe me, yours truly,

C. L.

I have no acquaintce with Kemble at all, having only met him once or twice, but any information, &c., I can get from R. who is a good fellow, you may command.

I am sorry the rogues are so dilatory, but I distinctly believe they mean to fulfill their engagemt. I am sorry you are not here to see to these things—I am a poor man of business. But command me to the short extent of my tether.

My sister's kind remembces ever—

[Addressed] Mr. Howard Payne, 156 Palais Royal, Paris.

[Payne's translation of the French play was produced at Covent Garden on 6th November 1822, under the title *The Soldier's Daughter*. On the same night appeared a rival version at Drury Lane entitled *Two Galley Slaves*. Payne's was played eleven times. The new lady as Juliet was the other Fanny Kelly, not Lamb's: Fanny H. Kelly, from Dublin. The revival began on 14th November. Planché was James Robinson Planché (1796–1880), the most prolific of librettists. Robert William Elliston, of whom Lamb later wrote so finely, was then managing Drury Lane.

'Having been cheated.' Lamb's particular reference was to Baldwin (see the letter to Barton, 9th January 1823).

'The Duke of Wellington.' A reference to the duke's failure in representing England at the Congress of Powers in Vienna and Verona.]

439. MARY LAMB TO MRS. JAMES KENNEY

[No date: *? November 1822.*]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

How do you like Harwood? Is he not a noble boy? I congratulate you most heartily on this happy meeting, and only wish I were present to witness it. Come back with Harwood, I am dying to see you—we will talk, that is, you shall talk and I will listen from ten in the morning till twelve at night. My thoughts are often with you, and your children's dear faces are perpetually

before me. Give them all one additional kiss every morning for me. Remember there's one for Louisa, one to Ellen, one to Betsy, one to Sophia, one to James, one to Teresa, one to Virginia, and one to Charles. Bless them all! When shall I ever see them again? Thank you a thousand times for all your kindness to me. I know you will make light of the trouble my illness gave you; but the recollection of it often sits heavy on my heart. If I could ensure my health, how happy should I be to spend a month with you every summer!

When I met Mr. Kenney there, I sadly repented that I had not dragged you on to Dieppe with me. What a pleasant time we should have spent there!

You shall not be jealous of Mr. Payne. Remember he did Charles and I good service without grudge or grumbling. Say to him how much I regret that we owe him unreturnable obligations; for I still have my old fear that we shall never see him again. I received great pleasure from seeing his two successful pieces. My love to your boy Kenney, my boy James, and all my dear girls, and also to Rose; I hope she still drinks wine with you. Thank Lou-Lou for her little bit of letter. I am in a fearful hurry, or I would write to her. Tell my friend the Poetess that I expect some French verses from her shortly. I have shewn Betsy's and Sophy's letters to all who came near me, and they have been very much admired. Dear Fanny brought me the bag. Good soul you are to think of me! Manning has promised to make Fanny a visit this morning, happy girl! Miss James I often see, I think never without talking of you. Oh the dear long dreary Boulevards! how I do wish to be just now stepping out of a Cuckoo into them!

Farewel, old tried friend, may we meet again! Would you could bring your house with all its noisy inmates, and plant it, garden, gables and all, in the midst of Covent Garden.

Yours ever most affectionately,

M. LAMB.

My best respects to your good neighbours.

[Harwood was Harwood Holcroft.
'Coucou' was at that time the Parisian's name for a one-horse closed carriage.]

440. CHARLES LAMB TO JAMES KENNEY

[*Added to the letter above*]

DEAR KENNEY,

The £30 Draft I shall receive in January. When I have received that, I shall consider our account as quite cleared. I cannot rake into transactions between Mrs. Kenney and Miss James. Mrs. Kenney's services I owe her for still, and Payne's I should be happy to return. Harwood brings this. If the amount due to me in January will retard his fitting out, you may have a longer day. . . . But rub out of your brain any further items; that all goes into my Paris expences. As to Moore, I do not remember any coquetry about it; I readily agreed to meet him at H. Smith's. The illness of Mrs. S., which prevented it, was not of my inflicting. I had made a hit at him in the 'London' in his name of Little; and, though I should have been happy to have met him, that surely was reason sufficient not to volunteer a visit to him. It has been my regret that I missed him.

Adieu (a dry letter) C. L.

Love to Louisa, Ellen, and all.

[Miss Kelly added to this letter these few words of affection to Mrs Kenney:

The real old original Fanny Kelly takes this opportunity of assuring Mrs. Kenny that she remembers with pleasure—Oh, how imperfect is expression, kind looks, and sayings, experience felt, understood and appreciated by the aforesaid real old original Fanny Kelly, who with sincere anxiety for another friendly squeeze of the hand, hopes soon to tell Mrs. Kenny that * * * * is respectfully and faithfully attached.

'H. Smith.' Horatio, or Horace, Smith (1779–1849), author, with his brother James, of *Rejected Addresses*. Lamb groups them together, in his letter to Wordsworth of 26th April 1819: 'the sneering brothers, the vile Smiths.'

The Horace Smiths were friends of the Kenneys, and in a letter from Mary Shelley to Leigh Hunt, on 18th August 1823, in *The Book of Shelley and Mary*, privately printed by Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, there is some gossip picked up from the Kenneys, among which is the statement that Lamb, under the influence of French wine, was 'no favourite' with Horace Smith and his wife.

Thomas Moore had written anacreontics under the pseudonym of Thomas Little, and the reference is to Lamb's sonnet to Barry Cornwall in the *London Magazine* for September 1820, beginning:

Let hate, or grosser heats, their foulness mask
Neath riddling Junius, or in L—e's name.

The second line was altered in Lamb's *Album Verses*, 1830, to:

Under the vizor of a borrowed name.]

441. TO JOHN TAYLOR

[Dated at end: *7th December 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

I should like the enclosed Dedication to be printed, unless you dislike it. I like it. It is in the olden style. But if you object to it, put forth the book as it is. Only pray don't let the Printer mistake the word *curt* for *curst.*

C. L.

Dec. 7, 1822.

DEDICATION

TO THE FRIENDLY AND JUDICIOUS READER,

who will take these Papers, as they were meant; not understanding every thing perversely in the absolute and literal sense, but giving fair construction as to an after-dinner conversation; allowing for the rashness and necessary incompleteness of first thoughts; and not remembering, for the purpose of an after taunt, words spoken peradventure after the fourth glass. The Author wishes (what he would will for himself) plenty of good friends to stand by him, good books to solace him, prosperous events to all his honest undertakings, and a candid interpretation to his most hasty words and actions. The other sort (and he hopes many of them will purchase his book too) he greets with the curt invitation of Timon, 'Uncover, dogs, and lap:' or he dismisses them with the confident security of the philosopher, —'you beat but on the case of ELIA.'

On better consideration, pray omit that Dedication. The Essays want no Preface: they are *all Preface.* A Preface is nothing but a talk with the reader; and they do nothing else. Pray omit it.

There will be a sort of Preface in the next Magazine, which may act as an advertisement, but not proper for the volume.

Let ELIA come forth bare as he was born.

C. L.

Dec. 7, 1822.

[*Elia. Essays which have appeared under that signature in the London Magazine* was just about to be published. The book came out with no preface.

'You beat but on the case.' When Anaxarchus, the philosopher, was being pounded to death in a mortar, after the death of his friend, Alexander the Great, he made use of a similar phrase.

The 'sort of Preface in the next Magazine' (January 1823) was the 'Character of the Late Elia,' used as a preface to the *Last Essays* in 1833.

The reference to the 'Late Elia' in the 'Character' in the *London Magazine* for January 1823 led to a series of jokes under 'The Lion's Head.' Hood wrote in the same number:

> Elia is dead!—at least so a *Friend* says; but if he be dead, we have seen him in one of those hours 'when he is wont to walk'; and his *ghost-ship* has promised us very *material* assistance in our future numbers. We were greatly tempted to put the Irish question to him of 'Why did you die?'—But as we know how very unusual a thing it is for a gentleman to give his reasons for such a step, we resisted the temptation. Mercy on us!—we hope we are wrong,—but we have our shadowy suspicions, that Elia, poor gentleman! has not been honestly dealt by. Mercutio was killed by one Will Shakspeare, a poacher, though his death was laid to other hands;—and Sir Roger de Coverley (a gentleman more near our own time) perished under very mysterious circumstances. We could lay our finger upon the very man we suspect as being guilty of Elia's death! Elia's ghost, however, cannot sleep in its grave, for it has been constantly with us since his death, and vows it must still write for its peace of mind. Indeed the first paper in our present number is one of its grave consolations.

In March 1823 the subject is reopened by Lamb himself, in as misleading a mood as even he could indulge:

> Elia is *not* dead!—We thought as much—and even hinted our thought in the number for January. The following letter declaring Elia's existence is in his own handwriting, and was left by his own hand. We never saw a man so extremely alive, as he was, to the injury done him:
>
> 'Elia returns his thanks to the facetious Janus Weathercock, who, during his late unavoidable excursion to the Isles of Sark, Guernsey, and Jersey, took advantage of his absence to plot a sham account of his death; and to impose upon the town a posthumous essay, signed by his ghost—which, how like it is to any of the undoubted essays of the author, may be seen by comparing it with his volume just published. One or two former papers, with his signature, which are not reprinted in the volume, he has reason to believe were pleasant forgeries by the same ingenious hand.'

There were, I fancy, no such impositions; but it was like Lamb to be so carelessly generous to young colleagues.]

442. TO MESSRS. TAYLOR AND HESSEY

[P.M. *12th December 1822.*]

I am quite asham'd of troubling you, but can I have a revise of Philelia (if I can't never mind) *sent by post.* Don't trouble yourself to messenger it. I have REASONS for omitting a name or two at the end. C. LAMB.

['Phil-Elia' was the signature to 'A Character of the late Elia,' which differs in its *London Magazine* form and as printed as a preface to the *Last Essays*, 1833. The notes to the *Elia* volume in my edition of Lamb's *Works* tell the whole story.]

443. TO WALTER WILSON

E. I. H. *16 dec. 22.*

DEAR WILSON

Lightening I was going to call you—

You must have thought me negligent in not answering your letter sooner. But I have a habit of never writing letters, but at the office—'tis so much time cribbed out of the Company—and I am but just got out of the thick of a Tea Sale, in which most of the Entry of Notes, deposits &c. usually falls to my share. Dodwell is willing, but alas! slow. To compare a pile of my notes with his little hillock (which has been as long a building), what is it but to compare Olympus with a mole-hill. Then Wadd is a sad shuffler.—

I have nothing of Defoe's but two or three Novels, and the Plague History. I can give you no information about him. As a slight general character of what I remember of them (for I have not look'd into them latterly) I would say that 'in the appearance of *truth* in all the incidents and conversations that occur in them they exceed any works of fiction I am acquainted with. It is perfect illusion. The *Author* never appears in these self-narratives (for so they ought to be called or rather Autobiographies) but the *narrator* chains us down to an implicit belief in every thing he says. There is all the minute detail of a log-book in it. Dates are painfully pressed upon the memory. Facts are repeated over and over in varying phrases, till you cannot chuse but believe them. It is like reading Evidence given in a Court of Justice. So anxious the story-teller seems, that the truth should be clearly comprehended, that when he has told us a matter of fact, or a motive, in a line or two farther down he *repeats* it with his favorite figure of speech, "I say" so and so,—though he had made it abundantly plain before. This is in imitation of the common people's way of speaking, or rather of the way in which they are addressed by a master or mistress, who wishes to impress something upon their memories; and has a wonderful effect upon matter-of-fact readers. Indeed it is to such principally that he writes. His style is elsewhere beautiful, but plain *& homely.* Robinson Crusoe is delightful to all ranks and classes, but it is easy to see that it is written in phraseology peculiarly adapted

to the lower conditions of readers: hence it is an especial favorite with seafaring men, poor boys, servant maids &c. His novels are capital kitchen-reading, while they are worthy from their deep interest to find a shelf in the Libraries of the wealthiest, and the most learned. His passion for *matter of fact narrative* sometimes betrayed him into a long relation of common incidents which might happen to any man, and have no interest but the intense appearance of truth in them, to recommend them. The whole latter half, or two thirds, of Colonel Jack is of this description. The beginning of Colonel Jack is the most affecting natural picture of a young thief that was ever drawn. His losing the stolen money in the hollow of a tree, and finding it again when he was in despair, and then being in equal distress at not knowing how to dispose of it, and several similar touches in the early history of the Colonel, evince a deep knowledge of human nature; and, putting out of question the superior *romantic* interest of the latter, in my mind very much exceed Crusoe. Roxana (1st Edition) is the next in Interest, though he left out the best part of it [in] subsequent Editions from a foolish hypercriticism of his friend, Southerne. But Moll Flanders, the account of the Plague &c. &c. are all of one family, and have the same stamp of character.'—

[*At the top of the first page is added :*]

Omitted at the end . . . believe me with friendly recollections, *Brother* (as I used to call you) Yours C. LAMB.

[*Below the 'Dear Wilson' is added in smaller writing :*]

The review was not mine, nor have I seen it.

[Lamb's old India House friend, Walter Wilson, was beginning his *Memoirs of the Life and Times of Daniel Defoe*, 1830. The passage sent to him in this letter by Lamb he printed in vol. iii, page 428. Some years later Lamb sent Wilson a further criticism. See also p. 371 for the reference to *Roxana*.

In the recently discovered paper of recollections of Charles Lamb, with a very careful examination of his character, by Walter Wilson, printed in the *London Mercury* for December 1934, I do not find anything to explain the phrase 'Lightening I was going to call you,' but W. Wilson says that he and Lamb agreed to address each other as 'Brother.'

'Dodwell and Wadd.' Two India House clerks, old colleagues of Wilson too.]

444. TO J. A. HESSEY

[*About 18th December 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

Do your pleasure about the signature, A Merry Season to us all & auspicious New Year to our London.

C. LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'I think Lamb is referring to his "Rejoicings on the New Year's Coming of Age," in the *London Magazine* for January 1823, which was signed "Elia's Ghost."']

445. TO JOHN TAYLOR

[No date: *Late 1822.*]

DR. SIR,

I will call upon you on Saturday with or without an Elia, *which is not yet begun*—I return your paper corrected—

About ½ past 3 I will be with you. I am over head and ears in *profane* business.

E——

There are 2 more Reflectors, I dont care much about.

1. *Club of damn'd authors*—not good.
2. *5th of November*—pretty good.

Would they fill up gaps in the coming months, with some brief originals?

The Type is laudable.

[In August 1822 the *London Magazine* had reprinted Lamb's 'Confessions of a Drunkard,' first published in 1813, and resuscitations from the *Reflector*, 1811–12, were also contemplated.

In 'The Lion's Head' section of the *London Magazine* for February 1823 appeared this notice:

> The author of the *Essays of Elia* has promised A SERIES OF CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS, the first of which will appear in our next number. This intelligence will raise the spirit of Leila, who, since the death of Elia, has written a most feeling letter to his 'Shade,' from the shades below.

The series did not run long, beginning with 'Ritson *versus* John Scot, the Quaker,' in April 1823. In the *London Magazine* for November 1823 was 'Guy Faux,' which had begun in the *Reflector*. See vol. i of my edition of the *Works*.

'The Type.' Presumably of the *Elia* volume.]

446. TO ALARIC ALEXANDER WATTS

East India House,
22nd December 1822.

DEAR SIR,

I beg you to accept my
thanks for a copy of
your poems, which I
have found very elegant and
full of fancy. I had seen
and admired one of them
attributed to Lord Byron.
The volume is externally
handsome, and the poetry of
a kind, I should judge,
to have taken. But you
have described feelings too
inward, perhaps, to be
exposed to odious criticism.

I have inadvertently written this short acknowledgment sonnet fashion,—in fourteen lines—but where is the poetry! When your occupations give you leave, I shall hope for the pleasure of seeing you.

Your obliged C. LAMB.

[Alaric Alexander Watts (1797–1864), poetaster and journalist, was destined to become known as the inventor, or adapter, of the Literary Souvenirs and Albums which were so popular in the 1820's and 1830's, and of which Lamb was to grow so tired.

The book in question was, I think, *Poetical Sketches*, privately printed.]

447. TO BERNARD BARTON

[Dated at end: *23rd December 1822.*]

DEAR SIR,

I have been so distracted with business and one thing or other, I have not had a quiet quarter of an hour for epistolary purposes. Christmas too is come, which always puts a rattle into my morning scull. It is a visiting unquiet un-Quakerish season. I get more and more in love with solitude, and proportionately

hampered with company. I hope you have some holydays at this period. I have one day, Christmas day, alas! too few to commemorate the season. All work and no play dulls me. Company is not play, but many—(many times) times hard work. To play, is for a man to do what he please, or to do nothing—to go about soothing his particular fancies. I have lived to a time of life, to have outlived the good hours, the nine o'Clock suppers, with a bright hour or two to clear up in afterwds.—Now you cannot get tea before that hour, and then sit gaping, music-bother'd perhaps, till half-past 12 brings up the tray, and what you steal of convivial enjoymt after, is heavily paid for in the disquiet of to-morrow's head.

I am pleased with your liking John Woodvil, and amused with your knowledge of our drama being confined to Shakspeare and Miss Bailly. What a world of fine territory between Land's End and Johnny Grots have you missed traversing. I almost envy you to have so much to read. I feel as if I had read all the Books I want to read. O to forget Fielding, Steele, &c., and read 'em new.

Can you tell me a likely place where I could pick up cheap Fox's Journal?—There are no Quaker Circulating Libraries?—Ellwood, too, I must have.—I rather grudge that S[outhe]y has taken up the History of your People. I am afraid he will put in some Levity. I am afraid I am not quite exempt from that fault in certain magazine Articles where I have introduced mention of them. Were they to do again, I would reform them.

Why should not you write a poetical Account of your old Worthies, deducing them from Fox to Woolman?—but I remember you did talk of something in that kind, as a counterpart to the Ecclesiastical Sketches. But would not a Poem be more consecutive than a string of Sonnets? You have no Martyrs *quite to the Fire*, I think, among you. But plenty of Heroic Confessors, Spirit-Martyrs—Lamb-Lions—Think of it—

It would be better than a series of Sonnets on 'Eminent Bankers.'—I like a hit at our way of life, tho' it does well for me, better than anything short of *all one's time to one's self*, for which alone I rankle with envy at the rich. Books are good, and Pictures are good, and Money to buy them therefore good, but to buy *TIME!* in other words, LIFE—

The 'compliments of the time to you' should end my letter, to a Friend I suppose I must say the 'sincerity of the season;' I hope they both mean the same. With excuses for this hastily penn'd note, believe me with great respect—

C. LAMB.

23 dec. 22.

[Miss Bailly would be Joanna Baillie (1762–1851), author of *Plays on the Passions.*

The copy of Fox's *Journal*, 1694, which was lent to Lamb is now in the possession of the Society of Friends. In it is written: 'This copy of George Fox's Journal, being the earliest edition of that work, the property of John T. Shewell of Ipswich, is lent for six months to Charles Lamb, at the request of Sam[l] Alexander of Needham, Ipswich, 1st mo. 4 1823.' Lamb has added: 'Returned by Charles Lamb, within the period, with many thanks to the Lender for the very great satisfaction which he has derived from the perusal of it.'

Southey was meditating a Life of George Fox and corresponded with Barton on the subject. He did not write the book.

Barton had a plan to provide Wordsworth's *Ecclesiastical Sonnets* with a Quaker pendant. He did not carry it out.]

448. TO ANNETTE (LANE)

Last day of poor 1822.

DEAR MADAM (I was going to write *Annette*)

Let me explain to you why you have not my acknowledgments sooner. Your kind note arrived a little after I had left the city on Saturday. On Sunday I had it not. Yesterday I saw it not for I was playing truant at Richmond. This morning at ten o'clock only did I find it and I have not lost a minute in thanking you for it.

Why, what a strange girl, *good* girl, I should say, you must be, to keep that Friday scratch eight years! I have a good mind to write out all the days:

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Saturday.

And now give me leave to say for my sister & myself that on any-one of those days in any week we shall be happy to see *Mrs. Kenny's pupil* & *Mrs. Aders' friend.* Mary is at home most

mornings, while we are at 20 Russell St., Covent Garden, where we shall be two or three weeks longer. Do pay her, if not me, a little visit. Your sister I hope will come with you.

Believe me with kind tho' imperfect remembces of the little girl at Mrs. Kenny's

Your friend

CHARLES LAMB.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Referring back eight years, we find Mary Lamb (2nd November 1814) reminding Barbara Betham of her tears at sight of Mrs. Holcroft (afterwards Mrs. Kenney) from whose school she had recently eloped. We may therefore infer that "Annette" was one of Barbara's schoolfellows, and that she had treasured some scrap of Lamb's writing—"Friday's scratch"—and that hearing of him again from Mrs. Aders after eight years' interval, she wrote him a letter for Christmas, addressed to the India House.']

449. TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

DEAR PAYNE, [*January 1823.*]

Your little books are most acceptable. 'Tis a delicate edition. They are gone to the binder's. When they come home I shall have two—the 'Camp' and 'Patrick's Day'—to read for the first time. I may say three, for I never read the 'School for Scandal.' '*Seen* it I have, and in its happier days.' With the books Harwood left a truncheon or mathematical instrument, of which we have not yet ascertained the use. It is like a telescope, but unglazed. Or a ruler, but not smooth enough. It opens like a fan, and discovers a frame such as they weave lace upon at Lyons and Chambery. Possibly it is from those parts. I do not value the present the less, for not being quite able to detect its purport. When I can find any one coming your way I have a volume for you, my Elias collected. Tell Poole, his Cockney in the Lon. Mag. tickled me exceedingly. Harwood is to be with us this evening with Fanny, who comes to introduce a literary lady, who wants to see me,—and whose portentous name is *Plura*, in English 'many things.' Now, of all God's creatures, I detest letters-affecting, authors-hunting ladies. But Fanny 'will have it so.' So Miss Many Things and I are to have a conference, of

which you shall have the result. I dare say she does not play at whist. Treasurer Robertson, whose coffers are absolutely swelling with pantomimic receipts, called on me yesterday to say he is going to write to you, but if I were also, I might as well say that your last bill is at the Banker's, and will be honored on the instant receipt of the third Piece, which you have stipulated for. If you have any such in readiness, strike while the iron is hot, before the Clown cools. Tell Mrs. Kenney, that the Miss F. H. (or H. F.) Kelly, who has begun so splendidly in Juliet, is the identical little Fanny Kelly who used to play on their green before their great Lying-Inn Lodgings at Bayswater. Her career has stopt short by the injudicious bringing her out in a vile new Tragedy, and for a third character in a stupid old one,—the Earl of Essex. This is Macready's doing, who taught her. Her recitation, &c. (*not her voice or person*), is masculine. It is so clever, it seemed a male *Debut*. But cleverness is the bane of Female Tragedy especially. Passions uttered logically, &c. It is bad enough in men-actors. Could you do nothing for little Clara Fisher? Are there no French Pieces with a Child in them? By Pieces I mean here dramas, to prevent male-constructions. Did not the Blue Girl remind you of some of Congreve's women? Angelica or Millamant? To me she was a vision of Genteel Comedy realized. Those kind of people never come to see one. *N'import*—havn't I Miss Many Things coming? Will you ask Horace Smith to——[*The remainder of this letter has been lost.*]

[Payne seems to have sent Lamb the pretty Paris edition of Sheridan in three volumes. *The Camp* and *St. Patrick's Day* are among Sheridan's less-known plays.

Poole was writing articles on France in the *London Magazine*. Lamb refers to 'A Cockney's Rural Sports,' in the number for December 1822.

Fanny was Fanny Holcroft. Could 'Plura' have been Hannah More? A Lamb pun.

The new tragedy in which the wrong Miss Kelly had to play was probably *The Huguenot*, produced 11th December 1822. *The Earl of Essex* was revived 30th December 1822. Macready played in both.

'Cleverness is the bane.' See Lamb's little article on 'The New Acting' in my edition of Lamb's *Works*.

The Blue Girl seems to refer to the lady mentioned at the end of the first letter to Payne.

Angelica is in Congreve's *Love for Love*; Millamant in his *Way of the World*.

It would be interesting to know what Lamb wanted from Horace Smith.]

450. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[No date: *January 1823.*]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I beg your acceptance of ELIA, detached from any of its old companions which might have been less agreeable to you. I hope your eyes are better, but if you must spare them, there is nothing in my pages which a Lady may not read aloud without indecorum, *which is more than can be said of Shakspeare.*

What a nut this last sentence would be for Blackwood!

You will find I availed myself of your suggestion, in curtailing the dissertation on Malvolio.

I have been on the Continent since I saw you.

I have eaten frogs.

I saw Monkhouse tother day, and Mrs. M. being too poorly to admit of company, the annual goosepye was sent to Russell Street, and with its capacity has fed 'A hundred head' (not of Aristotle's) but 'of Elia's friends.'

Mrs. Monkhouse is sadly confined, but chearful.—

This packet is going off, and I have neither time, place nor solitude for a longer Letter.

Will you do me the favor to forward the other volume to Southey?

Mary is perfectly well, and joins me in kindest remembces to you all. [*Signature cut away.*]

['What a nut . . . for Blackwood.' To help on Maga's great cause against Cockney arrogance.

'The dissertation on Malvolio.' When the *Elia* essay 'On some of the Old Actors' had appeared in the *London Magazine* for February 1822 it was much longer than in the *Elia* volume of 1823. See vol. ii of my edition of the *Works* for the full text. Wordsworth seems to have suggested abbreviation.]

451. TO MR. AND MRS. J. D. COLLIER

Twelfth Day [*6th January*], *1823.*

The pig was above my feeble praise. It was a dear pigmy. There was some contention as to who should have the ears, but in

spite of his obstinacy (deaf as these little creatures are to advice) I contrived to get at one of them.

It came in boots too, which I took as a favor. Generally those petty toes, pretty toes! are missing. But I suppose he wore them, to look taller.

He must have been the least of his race. His little foots would have gone into the silver slipper. I take him to have been Chinese, and a female.—

If Evelyn could have seen him, he would never have farrowed two such prodigious volumes, seeing how much good can be contained in—how small a compass!

He crackled delicately.

John Collier Junr has sent me a Poem which (without the smallest bias from the aforesaid present, believe me) I pronounce *sterling*.

I set about Evelyn, and finished the first volume in the course of a natural day. To-day I attack the second.—Parts are very interesting.—

I left a blank at top of my letter, not being determined *which* to address it to, so Farmer and Farmer's wife will please to divide our thanks. May your granaries be full, and your rats empty, and your chickens plump, and your envious neighbors lean, and your labourers busy, and you as idle and as happy as the day is long!

VIVE L'AGRICULTURE!

Frank Field's marriage of course you have seen in the papers, and that his brother Barron is expected home.

> How do you make your pigs so little?
> They are vastly engaging at that age.
> I was so myself.
> Now I am a disagreeable old hog—
> A middle-aged-gentleman-and-a-half.

My faculties, thank God, are not much impaired. I have my sight, hearing, taste, pretty perfect; and can read the Lord's Prayer in the common type, by the help of a candle, without making many mistakes.

Believe me, while my faculties last, a proper appreciator of

your many kindnesses in this way; and that the last lingering relish of past flavors upon my dying memory will be the smack of that little Ear. It was the left ear, which is lucky. Many happy returns (not of the Pig) but of the New Year to both.—

Mary for her share of the Pig and the memoirs desires to send the same—

Dr. Mr. C. and Mrs. C.—

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

[This letter is usually supposed to have been addressed by Lamb to Mr. and Mrs. Bruton of Mackery End. The address is, however, 'Mrs. Collier, Smallfield Place, East Grinstead, Sussex.'

'If Evelyn could have seen him.' John Evelyn's *Diary* had recently been published, in 1818 and 1819, in two large quarto volumes.]

452. TO CHARLES ADERS

[*8th January 1823.*]

DEAR SIR,

We shall have great pleasure in surprising Mrs. Aders on her Birthday—You will perceive how cunningly I have contrived the direction of this note, *to evade postage.*

Yours truly

C. LAMB.

8 Jan. '23.

[This is the only note to Aders, a friend of Crabb Robinson, to whose house Lamb often went for talk and whist. Aders had a fine collection of German pictures. See Lamb's verses to him in my edition of the *Works*. The cunning in the address consisted apparently in obtaining the signature of an India House colleague to certify that it was 'official.'

On 8th January 1823 Crabb Robinson was at Lamb's, when Coleridge was again one of the chief subjects of conversation. Lamb said: 'He ought not to have a wife and children; he should have a sort of diocesan care of the world —no parish duty.']

453. TO BERNARD BARTON

9 Jan., 1823.

'Throw yourself on the world without any rational plan of support, beyond what the chance employ of Booksellers would afford you'!!!

Throw yourself rather, my dear Sir, from the steep Tarpeian rock, slap-dash headlong upon iron spikes. If you had but five consolatory minutes between the desk and the bed, make much of them, and live a century in them, rather than turn slave to the Booksellers. They are Turks and Tartars, when they have poor Authors at their beck. Hitherto you have been at arm's length from them. Come not within their grasp. I have known many authors for bread, some repining, others envying the blessed security of a Counting House, all agreeing they had rather have been Taylors, Weavers, what not? rather than the things they were. I have known some starved, some to go mad, one dear friend literally dying in a workhouse. You know not what a rapacious, dishonest set these booksellers are. Ask even Southey who (a single case almost) has made a fortune by book drudgery, what he has found them. O you know not, may you never know! the miseries of subsisting by authorship. 'Tis a pretty appendage to a situation like yours or mine, but a slavery worse than all slavery to be a bookseller's dependent, to drudge your brains for pots of ale and breasts of mutton, to change your free thoughts and voluntary numbers for ungracious TASK-WORK. Those fellows hate *us*. The reason I take to be, that, contrary to other trades, in which the Master gets all the credit (a Jeweller or Silversmith for instance), and the Journeyman, who really does the fine work, is in the background: in *our* work the world gives all the credit to Us, whom *they* consider as *their* Journeymen, and therefore do they hate us, and cheat us, and oppress us, and would wring the blood of us out, to put another sixpence in their mechanic pouches. I contend, that a Bookseller has a *relative honesty* towards Authors, not like his honesty to the rest of the world. B[aldwin], who first engag'd me as Elia, has not paid me up yet (nor any of us without repeated mortifying applials), yet how the Knave fawned while I was of service to him! Yet I dare say the fellow is punctual in settling his milk-score, &c.

Keep to your Bank, and the Bank will keep you. Trust not to the Public, you may hang, starve, drown yourself, for anything that worthy *Personage* cares. I bless every star, that Providence, not seeing good to make me independent, has seen it next good to settle me upon the stable foundation of Leadenhall. Sit down, good B. B., in the Banking Office; what, is there not from six to Eleven P.M. 6 days in the week, and is there not all Sunday? Fie, what a superfluity of man's time if you could think so! Enough for relaxation, mirth, converse, poetry, good thoughts, quiet thoughts. O the corroding torturing tormenting thoughts, that disturb the Brain of the unlucky wight, who must draw upon it for daily sustenance. Henceforth I retract all my fond complaints of mercantile employment, look upon them as Lovers' quarrels. I was but half in earnest. Welcome, dead timber of a desk, that makes me live. A little grumbling is a wholesome medicine for the spleen, but in my inner heart do I approve and embrace this our close but unharassing way of life. I am quite serious. If you can send me Fox, I will not keep it six *weeks*, and will return it, with warm thanks to yourself and friend, without blot or dog's ear. You much oblige me by this kindness.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

Please to direct to me at India Ho. in future. [? I am] not always at Russell St.

[Barton had long been meditating the advisability of giving up his place in the bank at Woodbridge and depending upon his pen. Lamb's letter of dissuasion is not the only one which he received. Byron had written to him in 1812: 'You deserve success; but we knew, before Addison wrote his Cato, that desert does not always command it. But suppose it attained:

> You know what ills the author's life assail—
> Toil, envy, want, the *patron*, and the jail.

Do not renounce writing, but never trust entirely to authorship. If you have a profession, retain it; it will be like Prior's fellowship, a last and sure resource.' Barton had now broken again into dissatisfaction with his life. He did not, however, leave the bank.

Southey made no 'fortune' by his pen. He almost always had to forestall his new works.]

454. TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

DEAR PAYNE, *23 January, '23.*

I have no mornings (my day begins at 5 P.M.) to transact business in, or talents for it, so I employ Mary, who has seen Robertson, who says that the Piece which is to be Operafied was sent to you six weeks since by a Mr. Hunter, whose journey has been delayed, but he supposes you have it by this time. On receiving it back properly done, the rest of your dues will be forthcoming. You have received £30 from Harwood, I hope? Bishop was at the theatre when Mary called, and he has put your other piece into C. Kemble's hands (the piece you talk of offering Elliston) and C. K. sent down word that he had not yet had time to read it. So stand your affairs at present. Glossop has got the Murderer. Will you address him on the subject, or shall I—that is, Mary? She says you must write more *showable* letters about these matters, for, with all our trouble of crossing out this word, and giving a cleaner turn to th' other, and folding down at this part, and squeezing an obnoxious epithet into a corner, she can hardly communicate their contents without offence. What, man, put less gall in your ink, or write me a biting tragedy!

C. LAMB.

455. TO BERNARD BARTON

January 24, 1823.

This notelet is to say, an Elia was book'd off to you from Spread Eagle, Gracechurch St. this 24 Jan 23—

When you have an opportunity I sh'd like to receive Fox at 20 Russell St—but no hurry. A month hence would suit me better than now.

Accept my thanks for the Sonnet, tho' I am not mad enough to take the last line for any thing more than a pretty alliteration.

Believe me with gt respects,

Yrs.

C. LAMB.

[This sonnet *To Elia* by Bernard Barton was printed in the *London Magazine* for February 1823:

SONNET TO ELIA

Delightful Author! unto whom I owe
Moments and moods of fancy and of feeling,
Afresh to grateful memory now appealing,
Fain would I 'bless thee—ere I let thee go!'
From month to month has the exhaustless flow
Of thy original mind, its wealth revealing,
With quaintest humour, and deep pathos healing
The World's rude wounds, revived Life's early glow:
And, mixt with this, at times, to earnest thought,
Glimpses of truth, most simple and sublime,
By thy imagination have been brought
Over my spirit. From the olden time
Of authorship thy patent should be dated,
And thou with Marvell, Brown, and Burton mated.]

456. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

Russell House
2 feb. /23.

DEAR AYRTON,

The Burneys and Paynes dine with us on Wednesday at half past four. It will give us great pleasure (what a canting phrase!)—in short, lad, will Mrs A. and your harmonious self join them? Get pen and ink forthwith and say so, Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[The Paynes were Payne the bookseller and his wife, *née* Burney.]

457. TO THE REV. WILLIAM HARNESS

SIR, *25 Jan 23*

I return you the Manuscript, which Messs Taylor & Hessey do not consider as exactly adapted to their Publication, and am only sorry that they have kept it so long without deciding. I can very sincerely say, that I think with you that it is a very *graceful* and pretty narrative. Julia's hoarding up her choice playthings, which *came to nothing*, particularly struck me. I am only a contributor to the Lond. Mag. and am not invested with any

editorial choice or function. Is it not probable that it might find a place in the Lady's Magazine, which is much improved from what we must remember it?—I believe it is published by Souter in St. Paul's Church Yard, but I have no interest in it.

Your obedt Serv.

ELIA—

[The Rev. William Harness (1790–1869) is chiefly known as the friend of Byron and of Mary Russell Mitford, whose life he wrote.

Lamb seems to have been much used as an intermediary between author and editor. Here is an undated note:]

458. TO J. A. HESSEY

The packet is a tour (for the Lond. Mag.) written by a particular friend of G. Dyers, who sent him to me, who cannot convince him that I am not the 'Editor.'

Will you glance over it, and if it won't do, transmit to me, or to its author, Mr. Butler, Equitable Assurce Office?

J. A. Hessey, Bookseller of Fleet St.

459. TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

February [*9th*], *1823*.

MY DEAR MISS LAMB—I have enclosed for you Mr. Payne's piece called Grandpapa, which I regret to say is not thought to be of the nature that will suit this theatre; but as there appears to be much merit in it, Mr. Kemble strongly recommends that you should send it to the English Opera House, for which it seems to be excellently adapted. As you have already been kind enough to be our medium of communication with Mr. Payne, I have imposed this trouble upon you; but if you do not like to act for Mr. Payne in the business, and have no means of disposing of the piece, I will forward it to Paris or elsewhere as you think he may prefer.

Very truly yours, HENRY ROBERTSON.

T. R. C. G., 8 Feb. 1823.

DEAR P——

We have just received the above, and want your instructions. It strikes me as a very merry little piece, that should be played by *very young actors*. It strikes me that Miss Clara Fisher would play the *boy* exactly. She is just such a forward chit. No young *man* would do it without its appearing absurd, but in a

girl's hands it would have just all the reality that a short dream of an act requires. Then for the sister, if Miss Stevenson that was, were Miss Stevenson and younger, they two would carry it off. I do not know who they have got in that young line, besides Miss C. F., at Drury, nor how you would like Elliston to have it —has he not had it? I am thick with Arnold, but I have always heard that the very slender profits of the English Opera House do not admit of his giving above a trifle, or next to none, for a piece of this kind. Write me what I should do, what you would ask, &c. The music (printed) is returned with the piece, and the French original. Tell Mr. Grattan I thank him for his book, which as far as I have read it is a very *companionable one.* I have but just received it. It came the same hour with your packet from Cov. Gar., *i.e.* yester-night late, to my summer residence, where, tell Kenney, the cow is quiet. Love to all at Versailles. Write quickly. C. L.

I have no acquaintance with Kemble at all, having only met him once or twice; but any information, &c., I can get from R., who is a good fellow, you may command. I am sorry the rogues are so dilatory, but I distinctly believe they mean to fulfill their engagement. I am sorry you are not here to see to these things. I am a poor man of business, but command me to the short extent of my tether. My sister's kind remembrance ever.

C. L.

[*Grandpapa* was eventually produced at Drury Lane, 25th May 1825, and played thrice. Miss Stevenson was an actress praised by Lamb in the *Examiner* (see vol. i of my edition of the *Works*). C. F. was Clara Fisher, mentioned above.

Samuel James Arnold was manager of the Lyceum, then known as the English Opera House; he was the brother of Mrs. William Ayrton, Lamb's friend.

Mr. Grattan was Thomas Colley Grattan (1792–1864), who was then living in Paris. His book would be *Highways and Byways; or, Tales of the Road Side, picked up in the French Provinces.* By a Walking Gentleman, just published, 1823.

There is one other note to Payne in the *Century Magazine*, unimportant and undated, suggesting a walk one Sunday.]

460. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *17th February 1823.*]

MY DEAR SIR,

I have read quite through the ponderous folio of G. F. I think Sewell has been judicious in omitting certain parts, as for instance where G. F. *has* revealed to him the natures of all the creatures in their names, as Adam had. He luckily turns aside from that compendious study of natural history, which might have superseded Buffon, to his proper spiritual pursuits, only just hinting what a philosopher he might have been. The ominous passage is near the beginning of the Book. It is clear he means a physical knowledge, without trope or figure. Also, pretences to miraculous healing and the like are more frequent than I should have suspected from the epitome in Sewell. He is nevertheless a great spiritual man, and I feel very much obliged by your procuring me the Loan of it. How I like the Quaker phrases—though I think they were hardly completed till Woolman. A pretty little manual of Quaker language (with an endeavour to explain them) might be gathered out of his Book. Could not you do it? I have read through G. F. without finding any explanation of the term *first volume* in the title page. It takes in all, both his life and his death. Are there more Last words of him? Pray, how may I venture to return it to Mr. Shewell at Ipswich? I fear to send such a Treasure by a Stage Coach. Not that I am afraid of the Coachman or the Guard *reading it*. But it might be lost. Can you put me in a way of sending it in safety? The kind hearted owner trusted it to me for six months. I think I was about as many days in getting through it, and I do not think that I skipt a word of it. I have quoted G. F. in my Quaker's meeting as having said he was 'lifted up in spirit' (which I felt at the time to be not a Quaker phrase), 'and the Judge and Jury were as dead men under his feet.' I find no such words in his Journal, and I did not get them from Sewell, and the latter sentence I am sure I did not mean to invent. I must have put some other Quaker's words into his mouth. Is it a fatality in me, that every thing I touch turns into a Lye? I once quoted two Lines from a translation of Dante, which Hazlitt very greatly admired, and quoted in a Book as proof of the stupendous power

of that poet, but no such lines are to be found in the translation, which has been searched for the purpose. I must have dreamed them, for I am quite certain I did not forge them knowingly. What a misfortune to have a Lying memory.—Yes, I have seen Miss Coleridge, and wish I had just such a —daughter. God love her—to think that she should have had to toil thro' five octavos of that cursed (I forget I write to a Quaker) Abbeypony History, and then to abridge them to 3, and all for £113. At her years, to be doing stupid Jesuits' Latin into English, when she should be reading or writing Romances. Heaven send her Uncle do not breed her up a Quarterly Reviewer! —which reminds me, that he has spoken very respectfully of you in the last number, which is the next thing to having a Review all to one's self. Your description of Mr. Mitford's place makes me long for a pippin and some carraways and a cup of sack in his orchard, when the sweets of the night come in.

Farewell. C. LAMB.

[In the 1694 folio of George Fox's *Journal* the revelation of the names of creatures occurs twice, once under Notts in 1647 and again under Mansfield in 1648.

'Sewell.' *The History of the Rise, Increase, and Progress of the Christian People called Quakers*, 1722. By William Sewell (1645–1720).

'In my Quaker's meeting.' The *Elia* essay.

'I once quoted two Lines.' Possibly, the late A. R. Waller suggested to me, the lines:

Because on earth their names
In Fame's eternal volume shine for aye,

quoted by Hazlitt in his *Round Table* essay 'On Posthumous Fame,' and again in one of his *Edinburgh Review* articles. They are presumably based upon the *Inferno*, Canto IV (see Haselfoot's translation, second edition, 1899, page 21, lines 74–8). But the 'manufacturer' of them must have had Spenser's line in his mind, 'On Fame's eternal bead-roll worthie to be fyled' (*Faerie Queene*, Bk. IV, Canto ii, Stanza 32). They have not yet been found in any translation of Dante. This explanation would satisfy Lamb's words 'quoted in a book,' i.e. *The Round Table*, published in 1817.

'Miss Coleridge.' Coleridge's daughter Sara, born in 1802, who had been brought up by her uncle, Southey. She had translated Martin Dobrizhoffer's Latin history of the Abipones in order to gain funds for her brother Derwent's college expenses. Her father considered the translation 'unsurpassed for pure mother English by anything I have read for a long time.' Sara Coleridge married her cousin, Henry Nelson Coleridge, in 1829. She edited her father's works, and died in 1852. At the present time she and her mother were visiting the Gillmans.

Mr. Mitford was John Mitford (1781–1859), rector of Benhall, in Suffolk, and editor of old poets. Later he became editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He was a cousin of Mary Russell Mitford. In the *Gentleman's Magazine* for May 1838, is a review of Talfourd's edition of Lamb's *Letters*, almost certainly from his pen, in which he records a visit to the Lambs in 1827. He also reviewed the *Final Memorials* in 1847 with some more personal recollections of Lamb in it.]

461. TO WALTER WILSON

[Dated at end: *24th Feb.* 1823.]

DEAR W.,

I write that you may not think me neglectful, not that I have any thing to say. In answer to your questions, it was at *your* house I saw an edition of Roxana, the preface to which stated that the author had left out that part of it which related to Roxana's daughter persisting in imagining herself to be so, in spite of the mother's denial, from certain hints she had picked up, and throwing herself continually in her mother's way (as Savage is said to have done in *his*, prying in at windows to get a glimpse of her), and that it was by advice of Southern, who objected to the circumstances as being untrue, when the rest of the story was founded on fact; which shows S. to have been a stupid-ish fellow. The incidents so resemble Savage's story, that I taxed Godwin with taking Falconer from his life by Dr. Johnson. You should have the edition (if you have not parted with it), for I saw it never but at your place at the Mews' Gate, nor did I then read it to compare it with my own; only I know the daughter's curiosity is the best part of *my* Roxana. The prologue you speak of was mine, so named, but not worth much. You ask me for 2 or 3 pages of verse. I have not written so much since you knew me. I am altogether prosaic. May be I may touch off a sonnet in time. I do not prefer Col. Jack to either Rob. Cr. or Roxana. I only spoke of the beginning of it, his childish history. The rest is poor. I do not know anywhere any good character of De Foe besides what you mention. I do not know that Swift mentions him. Pope does. I forget if D'Israeli has. Dunlop I think has nothing of him. He is quite new ground, and scarce known beyond Crusoe. I do not know who wrote Quarll. I never thought of Quarll as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty

dishes made of shells. Do you know the Paper in the Englishman by Sir Rd. Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of Crusoe. You must quote it entire. Captain G. Carleton wrote his own Memoirs; they are about Lord Peterborough's campaign in Spain, & a good Book. Puzzelli puzzles me, and I am in a cloud about Donald M'Leod. I never heard of them; so you see, my dear Wilson, what poor assistances I can give in the way of information. I wish your Book out, for I shall like to see any thing about De Foe or from you.

Your old friend, C. LAMB.

From my and your old compound. 24 Feb. '23.

[With this letter compare the letter on 9th September 1801, to Godwin, and the letter on 16th December 1822, to Wilson.

Defoe's *Roxana*, first edition, does not, as a matter of fact, contain the episode of the daughter which Lamb so much admired. Later editions have it. Godwin says in his Preface to *Faulkener*, 1807, the play to which Lamb wrote a prologue in praise of Defoe, that the only accessible edition of *Roxana* in which the story of Susannah is fully told is that of 1745.

Richard Savage was considered to be the natural son of the Countess of Macclesfield and Earl Rivers. His mother at first disowned him, but afterwards, when this became impossible, repulsed him. Johnson says in his *Life of Savage*, that it was his hero's 'practice to walk in the dark evenings for several hours before her door in hopes of seeing her as she might come by accident to the window or cross her apartment with a candle in her hand.'

Swift and Defoe were steady enemies, although I do not find that either mentions the other by name. But Swift in the *Examiner* often had Defoe in mind, and in his *Letter concerning the Sacramental 1st*, 1708, calls him 'the fellow that was pilloried, I have forgot his name', while Defoe in one of his political writings refers to Swift, *apropos* Wood's halfpence, as 'the copper farthing author.'

Pope referred to Defoe twice in the *Dunciad*: once as standing high, earless and unabashed in the pillory, and once, libellously, as the father of Norton, of the *Flying Post*.

Philip Quarll was the first imitation of *Robinson Crusoe*. It was published in 1727, purporting to be the narrative of one Dorrington, a merchant, and Quarll's discoverer. The title begins, *The Hermit; or, The Unparalleled Sufferings and Surprising Adventures of Mr. Philip Quarll, an Englishman.* . . . Lamb says in his essay on Christ's Hospital that the Blue-Coat boys used to read the book. The author of it is still unknown.

Steele's account of Selkirk is in the *Englishman*, No. 26, 1st December 1713. Wilson quoted it.

Defoe's fictitious *Military Memoirs of Capt. George Carleton* was published in 1728.

I cannot explain Puzzelli or Donald M'Leod. Later Lamb sent Wilson, who seems to have asked for some verse about Defoe, the *Ode to the Treadmill*, but Wilson did not use it.

'My old compound.' Crabb Robinson's *Diary* has this: 'The large room in the accountant's office at the East India House is divided into boxes or compartments, in each of which sit six clerks, Charles Lamb himself in one. They are called Compounds. The meaning of the word was asked one day, and Lamb said it was "a collection of simples."']

462. TO BERNARD BARTON

DEAR SIR, [Dated at end: *11th March 1823*.]

The approbation of my little book by your sister is very pleasing to me. The Quaker incident did not happen to me, but to Carlisle the surgeon, from whose mouth I have twice heard it, at an interval of ten or twelve years, with little or no variation, and have given it as exactly as I could remember it. The gloss which your sister, or you, have put upon it, does not strike me as correct. Carlisle drew no inference from it against the honesty of the Quakers, but only in favour of their surprising coolness; that they should be capable of committing a good joke, with an utter insensibility to its being any jest at all. I have reason to believe in the truth of it, because, as I have said, I heard him repeat it without variation at such an interval. The story loses sadly in print, for Carlisle is the best story teller I ever heard. The idea of the discovery of roasting pigs, I also borrowed from my friend Manning, and am willing to confess both my plagiarisms.

Should fate ever so order it that you shall be in town with your sister, mine bids me say that she shall have great pleasure in being introduced to her. I think I must give up the cause of the Bank—from nine to nine is galley-slavery, but I hope it is but temporary. Your endeavour at explaining Fox's insight into the nature of animals must fail, as I shall transcribe the passage. It appears to me that he stopt short in time, and was on the brink of falling with his friend Naylor, my favourite.—The book shall be forthcoming whenever your friend can make convenient to call for it. They have dragged me again into the Magazine, but I feel the spirit of the thing in my own mind

quite gone. 'Some brains' (I think Ben Jonson says it) 'will endure but one skimming.' We are about to have an inundation of poetry from the Lakes, Wordsworth and Southey are coming up strong from the North. The she Coleridges have taken flight, to my regret. With Sara's own-made acquisitions, her unaffectedness and no-pretensions are beautiful. You might pass an age with her without suspecting that she knew any thing but her mother's tongue. I don't mean any reflection on Mrs. Coleridge here. I had better have said her vernacular idiom. Poor C. I wish he had a home to receive his daughter in. But he is but as a stranger or a visitor in this world. How did you like Hartley's sonnets? The first, at least, is vastly fine. Lloyd has been in town a day or two on business, and is perfectly well. I am ashamed of the shabby letters I send, but I am by nature anything but neat. Therein my mother bore me no Quaker. I never could seal a letter without dropping the wax on one side, besides scalding my fingers. I never had a seal too of my own. Writing to a great man lately, who is moreover very Heraldic, I borrowed a seal of a friend, who by the female side quarters the Protectorial Arms of Cromwell. How they must have puzzled my correspondent!—My letters are generally charged as double at the Post office, from their inveterate clumsiness of foldure. So you must not take it disrespectful to your self if I send you such ungainly scraps. I think I lose £100 a year at the India House, owing solely to my want of neatness in making up Accots. How I puzzle 'em out at last is the wonder. I have to do with millions. *I?*

It is time to have done my incoherencies—
Believe me Yours Truly

C. LAMB.

Tuesd 11 Ma 23.

[Bernard Barton's sister was Maria Hack, author of many books for children. The Quaker incident is in the essay 'Imperfect Sympathies.' Carlisle was Sir Anthony Carlisle.

'Your endeavour at explaining Fox's insight.' See Letter 460.

'Naylor.' James Nayler (1617?–60), an early Quaker who permitted his admirers to look upon him as a new Christ. He went to extremes totally foreign to the spirit of the Society. Barton made a paraphrase of Nayler's *Last Testimony*.

'They have dragged me again.' Lamb had been quite ready to give up *Elia* with the first essays. 'Old China,' one of his most charming papers, was in the March *London Magazine*.

'Some brains . . .' I had to give this up in my large edition of the Letters. I now find that Swift says it, not Ben Jonson. 'There is a brain that will endure but one scumming.'—Preface to *The Battle of the Books*.

'Hartley's sonnets.' Four sonnets by Hartley Coleridge were printed in the *London Magazine* for February 1823, addressed to R. S. Jameson.

'Writing to a great man lately.' This was Sir Walter Scott. Barron Field would be the friend with the seal.]

463. TO J. A. HESSEY

[No date: *Spring 1823*.]

DEAR H.,

I enclose for Lion's Head, instead of that which I wrote last night and which you will receive with the Proofs, *per Post*, from Islington.

I particularly beg you to sign the Letter to the Old Gentleman, *Elia* instead of S T P T and *most particularly request it as a favour* that you will blot out the signature of Elia from the Horns Vision, becaus of Ladies &c.

Let it go forth anonymous.

Yours

C. LAMB.

Send Quinsey the proof and let him judge of it. I will sacrifice it if he does not approve.

Yrs.

C. L.

[Lamb changed his mind a good deal while this joke was in preparation, as the documents in the Harry Elkins Widener Memorial Library at Harvard demonstrate.

De Quincey had begun his 'Letters to a Young Man whose Education has been Neglected' in the *London Magazine* for January 1823. The editor, however, did not then care for Lamb's parody, and it did not appear until January 1825. 'Quinsey,' or De Quincey, as we learn later, approved of it.

The 'Vision of Horns' was printed in the same number.

De Quincey and Lamb were not intimate, but we have De Quincey's very circumstantial and entertaining account of a dinner at the Lambs' 'in the winter of 1821–2,' which does more to reconstruct the essayist than the words of many a more intimate friend.]

464. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *5th April 1823.*]

DEAR SIR,

You must think me ill mannered not to have replied to your first letter sooner, but I have an ugly habit of aversion from letter writing, which makes me an unworthy correspondent. I have had no spring, or cordial call to the occupation of late. I have been not well lately, which must be my lame excuse. Your poem, which I consider very affecting, found me engaged about a humorous Paper for the London, which I had called a 'Letter to an *Old Gentleman* whose Education had been neglected'—and when it was done Taylor and Hessey would not print it, and it discouraged me from doing any thing else, so I took up Scott, where I had scribbled some petulant remarks, and for a make shift father'd them on Ritson. it is obvious I could not make your Poem a part of them, and as I did not know whether I should ever be able to do to my mind what you suggested, I thought it not fair to keep back the verses for the chance. Mr. Mitford's sonnet I like very well; but as I also have my reasons against interfering at all with the Editorial arrangement of the London, I transmitted it (not in my own handwriting) to them, who I doubt not will be glad to insert it. What eventual benefit it can be to you (otherwise than that a kind man's wish is a benefit) I cannot conjecture. Your Society are eminently men of Business, and will probably regard you as an idle fellow, possibly disown you, that is to say, if you had put your own name to a sonnet of that sort, but they cannot excommunicate Mr. Mitford, therefore I thoroughly approve of printing the said verses. When I see any Quaker names to the Concert of Antient Music, or as Directors of the British Institution, or bequeathing medals to Oxford for the best classical themes, etc.—then I shall begin to hope they will emancipate you. But what as a Society can they do for you? you would not accept a Commission in the Army, nor they be likely to procure it; Posts in Church or State have they none in their giving; and then if they disown you—think—you must live 'a man forbid.'

I wishd for you yesterday. I dined in Parnassus, with Wordsworth, Coleridge, Rogers, and Tom Moore—half the Poetry of England constellated and clustered in Gloster Place! It was a

delightful Evens. Coleridge was in his finest vein of talk, had all the talk, and let 'em talk as evilly as they do of the envy of Poets, I am sure not one there but was content to be nothing but a listener. The Muses were dumb, while Apollo lectured on his and their fine Art. It is a lie that Poets are envious. I have known the best of them, and can speak to it, that they give each other their merits, and are the kindest critics as well as best authors. I am scribbling a muddy epistle with an aking head, for we did not quaff Hippocrene last night. Marry, it was Hippocras rather. Pray accept this as a letter in the mean time, and do me the favor to mention my respects to Mr. Mitford, who is so good as to entertain good thoughts of Elia, but don't show this almost impertinent scrawl. I will write more respectfully next time, for believe me, if not in words, in feelings, yours most so.

['Your poem.' Barton's poem was entitled *A Poet's Thanks*, and was printed in the *London Magazine* for April 1823, the same number that contained Lamb's article on Ritson and Scott. It is one of his best poems, an expression of contentment in simplicity. Scott was John Scott of Amwell (Barton's predecessor as the Quaker poet), who had written a rather foolish book of prose, *Critical Essays on the English Poets*. Ritson was Joseph Ritson, the critic and antiquarian. See vol. i of my edition of the *Works* for the article. Barton seems to have suggested to Lamb that he should write an essay around the poem *A Poet's Thanks*. Mitford's sonnet, which was printed in the *London Magazine* for June 1823, was addressed commiseratingly to Bernard Barton. It began:

> What to thy broken Spirit can atone,
> Unhappy victim of the Tyrant's fears;

and continued in the same strain, the point being that Barton was the victim of his Quaker employers, who made him 'prisoner at once and slave.' Lamb's previous letter shows us that Barton was being worked from nine till nine, and we must suppose also that an objection to his poetical exercises had been lodged or suggested. The matter righted itself in time.

'I dined in Parnassus.' This dinner, at Thomas Monkhouse's, No. 34 Gloucester Place, is described both by Moore and by Crabb Robinson, who was present. Moore wrote in his *Journal*:

> Dined at Mr. Monkhouse's (a gentleman I had never seen before) on Wordsworth's invitation, who lives there whenever he comes to town. A singular party. Coleridge, Rogers, Wordsworth and wife, Charles Lamb (the hero at present of the *London Magazine*), and his sister (the poor woman who went mad in a diligence on the way to Paris), and a Mr. Robinson, one of the *minora sidera* of this constellation of the Lakes; the host himself, a Mæcenas of the school, contributing nothing but good dinners and silence. Charles Lamb, a clever fellow, certainly, but full of villainous and abortive

puns, which he miscarries of every minute. Some excellent things, however, have come from him.

Lamb told Moore that he had hitherto always felt an antipathy to him, but henceforward should like him.

Crabb Robinson writes:

April 4th. Dined at Monkhouse's. Our party consisted of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, Moore, and Rogers. Five poets of very unequal worth and most disproportionate popularity, whom the public probably would arrange in the very inverse order, except that it would place Moore above Rogers. During this afternoon, Coleridge alone displayed any of his peculiar talent. He talked much and well. I have not for years seen him in such excellent health and spirits. His subjects metaphysical criticism—Wordsworth he chiefly talked to. Rogers occasionally let fall a remark. Moore seemed conscious of his inferiority. He was very attentive to Coleridge, but seemed to relish Lamb, whom he sat next. L. was in a good frame—kept himself within bounds and was only cheerful at last. . . . I was at the bottom of the table, where I very ill performed my part. . . . I walked home late with Lamb.

Many years later Robinson sent to the *Athenæum* (25th June 1853), on the publication of Moore's *Journal*, a further and fuller account of the evening.

Here might come two undated letters, one to Monkhouse which, although obviously written in December, can be inserted now, and one to Ayrton.]

465. TO THOMAS MONKHOUSE

DEAR M., [No date.]

I am suffering under a most severe cold, which are always obstinate things with me, and on water gruel diet. Pray set me down as certainly not to dine with you on Saturday. I must, if I can be on my legs, dine out on Christmas day at a very old friend's, whom I have not failed on that day for many a long year; and two *dinners out* in one week would make me seriously an invalid. If we can drop in towards night, we will; but I am sure that would be imprudent. Still—

at all Events make up your *dinner* Table without us, and merry be your guests!

Yours most Truly,

Monday. C. LAMB.

[Addressed] T. Monkhouse, Esq., 67 Gloucester Place, Portman Square.

466. TO WILLIAM AYRTON

[No date: *? 1823.*]

Cards & cold mutton in Russell St on Friday at 8 & 9
Gin and Jokes from ½ past that time to 12
Pass this on to MR. PAYNE and apprize Martin thereof

467. TO B. W. PROCTER

April 13th, 1823.

DEAR LAD,

You must think me a brute beast, a rhinoceros, never to have acknowledged the receipt of your precious present. But indeed I am none of those shocking things, but have arrived at that indisposition to letter-writing, which would make it a hard exertion to write three lines to a king to spare a friend's life. Whether it is that the Magazine paying me so much a page, I am loath to throw away composition—how much a sheet do you give your correspondents? I have hung up Pope, and a gem it is, in my town room; I hope for your approval. Though it accompanies the 'Essay on Man,' I think that was not the poem he is here meditating. He would have looked up, somehow affectedly, if he were just conceiving 'Awake, my St. John.' Neither is he in the 'Rape of the Lock' mood exactly. I think he has just made out the last lines of the 'Epistle to Jervis,' between gay and tender,

And other beauties envy Worsley's eyes.

I'll be damn'd if that isn't the line. He is brooding over it, with a dreamy phantom of Lady Mary floating before him. He is thinking which is the earliest possible day and hour that she will first see it. What a miniature piece of gentility it is! Why did you give it me? I do not like you enough to give you anything so good.

I have dined with T. Moore and breakfasted with Rogers, since I saw you; have much to say about them when we meet, which I trust will be in a week or two. I have been over-watched and over-poeted since Wordsworth has been in town. I was obliged for health sake to wish him gone: but now he is gone I feel a great loss. I am going to Dalston to recruit, and have serious thoughts—of altering my condition, that is, of taking to sobriety. What do you advise me?

T. Moore asked me your address in a manner which made me believe he meant to call upon you.

Rogers spake very kindly of you, as every body does, and none with so much reason as your C. L.

[Procter had sent Lamb a portrait of Pope, of which we have an account in an article in the *Bookman* for 30th August 1930, by Mr. J. M. Turnbull, from which I quote as follows:

The portrait (referred to in Lamb's letter of 13th April 1823, to Procter), as established by Major Butterworth, was an engraving by Major Robinson after Charles Jervas, executed as a frontispiece for Robert Jennings's 1819 folio edition of the *Essay on Man*. Lamb might have had something to add to his appreciation, on the score of Modern Gallantry, had he known that the portrait was merely an extract from a larger picture from which the gay picture of Martha Blount hovering against a background of books had been excised. We meet Lamb's copy once more in Procter's obituary notice in the *Athenæum* of 24th January 1835. 'The room in which he lived,' writes Procter, of Lamb's lodgings in Russell Street, which he occupied until September 1824, 'was plainly and almost carelessly furnished. Let us enter it for a moment. Its ornaments, you see, are principally several long shelves of ancient books (those are his "ragged veterans"); some Hogarth's prints, two after Leonardo da Vinci and Titian, and a portrait of Pope, enriching the walls.'

Shortly after this exchange of courtesies, Procter was invited by the publishers, James Carpenter & Son, to contribute a commentary to their *Effigies Poeticae: or Portraits of the British Poets*, which was published in 1824; the 'Conclusion' to the commentary being dated 10th April of that year, or just two days over a year after the date of Lamb's letter. The commentary was issued separately in nicely printed octavo, the portraits apparently being made up in portfolio; though a handsome large-page issue of the former was also published with the prints interleaved. In the introduction, the commentator confesses the adoption of 'another man's idea, which is neither the poet's nor our own.' The identity of that other man does not seem obscure when the above confession is ranged alongside certain unmistakable veiled allusions to Lamb that are scattered through the text. If this surmise is correct, a still lighter demand on the imagination will suppose the deliberate expansion to a system of Lamb's fanciful treatment of the Pope portrait. Adoption of Lamb's methods is greatly apparent in the notes on the portraits of several of the more famous poets, even though the brilliance of the original instance is missing.

'Lady Mary.' By Lady Mary, Lamb means, as Pope did in the first edition, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. But after his quarrel with that lady, Pope altered it to Worsley, signifying Lady Frances Worsley, daughter of the Duke of Marlborough and wife of Sir Robert Worsley.]

468. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

DEAR MISS H——, [P.M. *25th April 1823.*]

Mary has such an invincible reluctance to any epistolary exertion, that I am sparing her a mortification by taking the pen from her. The plain truth is, she writes such a pimping, mean, detestable hand, that she is ashamed of the formation of her letters. There is an essential poverty and abjectness in the frame of them. They look like begging letters. And then she is sure to omit a most substantial word in the second draught (for she never ventures an epistle, without a foul copy first) which is obliged to be interlined, which spoils the neatest epistle, you know [*the word 'epistle' is added above*]. Her figures, 1, 2, 3, 4, &c., where she has occasion to express numerals, as in the date (25 Apr 1823), are not figures, but Figurantes. And the combined posse go staggering up and down shameless as drunkards in the day time. It is no better when she rules her paper, her lines are 'not less erring' than her words—a sort of unnatural parallel lines, that are perpetually threatening to meet, which you know is quite contrary to Euclid [*here Lamb has ruled lines grossly unparallel*]. Her very blots are not bold like this, [*here a bold blot*] but poor [*here a poor smear*] smears half left in and half scratched out with another smear left in their place. I like a clean letter. A bold free hand, and a fearless flourish. Then she has always to go thro' them (a second operation) to dot her i s, and cross her t s. I don't think she can make a cork screw, if she tried—which has such a fine effect at the end or middle of an epistle—and fills up—

[*Here Lamb has made a corkscrew two inches long.*]

There is a corkscrew, one of the best I ever drew. By the way what incomparable whiskey that was of Monkhouse's. But if I am to write a letter, let me begin, and not stand flourishing like a fencer at a fair.

It gives me great pleasure (the letter now begins) to hear that you got down smoothly, and that Mrs. Monkhouse's spirits are so good and enterprising. It shews, whatever her posture may be, that her mind at least is not supine. I hope the excursion will enable the former to keep pace with its out-stripping neighbor.

Pray present our kindest wishes to her, and all. (That sentence should properly have come in the Post Script, but we airy Mercurial Spirits, there is no keeping us in). Time—as was said of one of us—toils after us in vain. I am afraid our co-visit with Coleridge was a dream. I shall not get away before the end (or middle) of June, and then you will be frog-hopping at Boulogne. And besides I think the Gilmans would scarce trust him with us, I have a malicious knack at cutting of apron strings. The Saints' days you speak of have long since fled to heaven, with Astræa, and the cold piety of the age lacks fervor to recall them —only Peter left his key—the iron one of the two, that shuts amain—and that's the reason I am lockd up. Meanwhile of afternoons we pick up primroses at Dalston, and Mary corrects me when I call 'em cowslips. God bless you all, and pray remember me euphoneously to Mr. Guwellegan. That Lee Priory must be a dainty bower, is it built of flints, and does it stand at Kingsgate? Did you remem

[*This is apparently the proper end of the letter. At least there is no indication of another sheet.*]

[Addressed to 'Miss Hutchinson, 17 Sion Hill, Ramsgate, Kent,' where she was staying with Mrs. Monkhouse.

'Not less erring.' A reminiscence of Cowley's line in his poem *On the Death of Sir Anthony Vandyck*:

His pen was not less erring than his heart.

Quoted by Lamb about Tipp in the essay on 'The South-Sea House.'

'"Time"—as was said of one of us.' Johnson wrote of Shakespeare, in the Prologue at the opening of Drury Lane Theatre in 1747:

And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.

'The Saints' days.' See note to the letter to Mrs. Wordsworth, 18th February 1818.

'Fled to heaven with Astræa.' Astræa, Goddess of Justice, was the last of the heavenly ones to abandon the earth and return to heaven.—Ovid, *Met.* i. 150.

'Iron one.' From Milton's *Lycidas*:

Two massy keyes he bore of metals twain,
The Golden opes, the Iron shuts amain.

'Mr. Guwellegan.' Probably Lamb's effort to write the name of Edward Quillinan, afterwards Wordsworth's son-in-law, whose first wife had been a Miss Brydges of Lee Priory.

'Lee Priory.' The home of Sir Egerton Brydges, at Ickham, near Canterbury. He had, however, now left, and his famous private press was closed.]

469. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

[No date: probably 1823.]

It is hard when a Gentleman cannot remain concealed, who affecteth obscurity with greater avidity than most do seek to have their good deeds brought to light—to have a prying inquisitive finger, (to the danger of its own scorching), busied in removing the little peck measure (scripturally a bushel) under which one had hoped to bury his small candle. The receipt of fern-seed, I think, in this curious age, would scarce help a man to walk invisible.

Well, I am discovered—and thou thyself, who thoughtest to shelter under the pease-cod of initiality (a stale and shallow device), art no less dragged to light—Thy slender anatomy—thy skeletonian D—— fleshed and sinewed out to the plump expansion of six characters—thy tuneful genealogy deduced—

By the way, what a name is Timothy!

Lay it down, I beseech thee, and in its place take up the properer sound of Timotheus—

Then mayst thou with unblushing fingers handle the Lyre 'familiar to the D——n name.'

With much difficulty have I traced thee to thy lurking-place. Many a goodly name did I run over, bewildered between Dorrien, and Doxat, and Dover, and Dakin, and Daintry—a wilderness of D's—till at last I thought I had hit it—my conjectures wandering upon a melancholy Jew—you wot the Israelite upon Change—Master Daniels—a contemplative Hebrew—to the which guess I was the rather led, by the consideration that most of his nation are great readers—

Nothing is so common as to see them in the Jews' Walk, with a bundle of scrips in one hand, and the Man of Feeling, or a volume of Sterne, in the other—

I am a rogue if I can collect what manner of face thou carriest, though thou seemest so familiar with mine—If I remember, thou didst not dimly resemble the man Daniels, whom at first I took thee for—a care-worn, mortified, economical, commercio-political countenance, with an agreeable limp in thy gait, if Elia mistake thee not. I think I shd. shake hands with thee, if I met thee.

[John Bates Dibdin, the son of Charles Dibdin the younger, and grandson of the great Charles Dibdin, was at this time a young man of about twenty-four,

engaged as a clerk in a shipping office in the city. I borrow from Canon Ainger an interesting letter from a sister of Dibdin on the beginning of the correspondence:

> My brother . . . had constant occasion to conduct the giving or taking of cheques, as it might be, at the India House. There he always selected 'the little clever man' in preference to the other clerks. At that time the *Elia Essays* were appearing in print. No one had the slightest conception who 'Elia' was. He was talked of everywhere, and everybody was trying to find him out, but without success. At last, from the style and manner of conveying his ideas and opinions on different subjects, my brother began to suspect that Lamb was the individual so widely sought for, and wrote some lines to him, anonymously, sending them by post to his residence, with the hope of sifting him on the subject. Although Lamb could not *know* who sent him the lines, yet he looked very hard at the writer of them the next time they met, when he walked up, as usual, to Lamb's desk in the most unconcerned manner, to transact the necessary business. Shortly after, when they were again in conversation, something dropped from Lamb's lips which convinced his hearer, beyond a doubt, that his suspicions were correct. He therefore wrote some more lines (anonymously, as before), beginning:
>
> I've found thee out, O Elia!
>
> and sent them to Colebrook Row. The consequence was that at their next meeting Lamb produced the lines, and after much laughing, confessed himself to be *Elia*. This led to a warm friendship between them.

Dibdin's letter of discovery was signed D. Hence Lamb's fumbling after his Christian name, which he probably knew all the time.

'Fern-seed.' 'We have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible.'—*1 Henry IV*, II. i. 96.

'The Lyre.' Glancing at Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*.]

470. TO BERNARD BARTON

DEAR SIR, [P.M. *3rd May 1823*.]

I am vexed to be two letters in your debt, but I have been quite out of the vein lately. A philosophical treatise is wanting, of the causes of the backwardness with which persons after a certain time of life set about writing a letter. I always feel as if I had nothing to say, and the performance generally justifies the presentiment. Taylor and Hessey did foolishly in not admitting the sonnet. Surely it might have followed the B. B. I agree with you in thinking Bowring's paper better than the former. I will inquire about my Letter to the Old Gentleman, but I expect it to *go in*, after those to the Young Gent are completed.

I do not exactly see why the Goose and little Goslings should emblematize *a Quaker poet that has no children*. But after all—perhaps it is a Pelican. The Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin around it I cannot decypher. The songster of the night pouring out her effusions amid a Silent Meeting of Madge Owlets, would be at least intelligible. A full pause here comes upon me, as if I had not a word more left. I will shake my brain. Once—twice—nothing comes up—George Fox recommends waiting on these occasions. I wait. Nothing comes. G. Fox—that sets me off again. I have finished the Journal, and 400 more pages of the *Doctrinals*, which I picked up for 7s. 6d. If I get on at this rate, the Society will be in danger of having two Quaker poets—to patronise. I am at Dalston now, but if, when I go back to Cov. Gar., I find thy friend has not call'd for the Journal, thee must put me in a way of sending it; and if it should happen that the Lender of it, having that volume, has not the other, I shall be most happy in his accepting the Doctrinals, which I shall read but once certainly. It is not a splendid copy, but perfect, save a leaf of Index.

I cannot but think *the London* drags heavily. I miss Janus. And O how it misses Hazlitt—Procter too is affronted (as Janus has been) with their abominable curtailment of his things—some meddling Editor or other—or phantom of one—for neither he nor Janus know their busy friend. But they always find the best part cut out; and they have done well to cut also. I am not so fortunate as to be served in this manner, for I would give a clean sum of money in sincerity to leave them handsomely. But the dogs—T. and H. I mean—will not affront me, and what can I do? must I go on to drivelling? Poor Relations is tolerable—but where shall I get another subject—or who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I assure you it teases me more than it used to please me. Ch. Lloyd has published a sort of Quaker poem, he tells me, and that he has order'd me a copy, but I have not got it. Have you seen it? I must leave a little wafer space, which brings me to an apology for a conclusion. I am afraid of looking back, for I feel all this while I have been writing nothing, but it may show I am alive.

Believe me, cordially yours.

C. LAMB.

[The sonnet probably was Mitford's to Barton, which, however, was printed in the June number of the *London Magazine*. Bowring, afterwards Sir John, was writing in the *London Magazine* on 'Spanish Romances.'

'The Goose and little Goslings.' Probably the design for a B. B. title-page.

John Taylor, Hood, and perhaps John Hamilton Reynolds, made up the *London Magazine* for press. In the May number, in addition to Lamb's 'Poor Relations,' were contributions from De Quincey, Hartley Coleridge, Cary, and Barton. But it was not what it had been.

Lloyd's Quaker poem would probably be one of those in his *Poems*, 1823, which contains some of his most interesting work.]

471. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

ELIA [P.M. *6th May 1823.*]

DEAR SIR,

Your verses were very pleasant, and I shall like to see more of them—I do not mean *addressed to me.*

I do not know whether you live in town or country, but if it suits your convenience I shall be glad to see you some evening—say Thursday—at 20 Great Russell Street, Covt Garden. If you can come, do not trouble yourself to write. We are old fashioned people who *drink tea* at six, or not much later, and give cold mutton and pickle at nine, the good old hour. I assure you (if it suit you) we shall be glad to see you.—

Yours, etc. C. LAMB.

E. I. H., Tuesday,
Some day of May 1823.
Not official.

My love to Mr. Railton.
The same to Mr. Rankin,
to the whole Firm indeed.

[The verses are not, I fear, now recoverable. Dibdin's firm was Railton, Rankin & Co., in Old Jewry.]

472. TO WILLIAM HONE (?)

[Dated by recipient: *6th May 1823.*]

DEAR SIR,

I am coming to town on Thursday to meet a friend from Paris, or I should gladly have accepted your invitation. I will take my chance of seeing you as I go to office to-morrow morning. I shall previously have breakfasted.

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

Tuesday.

[Mrs. Anderson's note. 'I conjecture this to have been written to Hone, who being now at 45 Ludgate Hill was very accessible to any one going citywards. The friend from Paris would be James Kenney, who was in London just now, and saw Payne's play *Clari* produced on 8th May at Covent Garden.

'The note sounds as if the Lambs were at Dalston and not coming to Russell Street till Thursday, but in that case Lamb's route would be straight through Shoreditch to Leadenhall Street, whereas walking from Russell Street he would go via Fleet Street and Ludgate Hill. Perhaps he was sleeping that Tuesday night in town, returning to Dalston on Wednesday, and back to town on Thursday. His letter to Dibdin of same date says nothing about being at Dalston.']

473. TO WILLIAM HONE

E. I. H. *19 May*, '23.

DEAR SIR,

I have been very agreeably entertained with your present, which I found very curious and amusing. What wiseacres our forefathers appear to have been! It should make *us* thankful who are grown so rational and polite. I should call to thank you for the book, but go home to Dalston at present. I shall beg your acceptance (when I see you) of my little book. I have Ray's *Collections of English Words not generally Used*, 1691; and in page 60 ('North Country words') occurs '*Rynt ye*'—'by your leave,' 'stand handsomely.' As, 'Rynt you, witch,' quoth Besse Locket to her mother; Proverb, Cheshire.—Doubtless this is the 'Aroint' of Shakspeare.

In the same collection I find several Shaksperisms. 'Rooky' wood: a Northern word for 'reeky,' 'misty,' &c. 'Shandy' a north country word for 'wild.' Sterne was York,

Yours obliged, C. LAMB.

I am at 14, Kingsland Row, Dalston. Will you take a walk over on Sunday? We dine exactly at 4, and shall be most glad to see you. If I don't hear from you (by note to E. I. Ho.) I will expect you.

Mr. Hone,
45, Ludgate Hill.

[Hone had just published his *Ancient Mysteries described, especially the English Miracle Plays*; but it may have been another of his very numerous works that he had sent to Lamb.

'Rynt ye.' Meaning, 'get out of the way.' The *Oxford Shakespeare Glossary* supports this derivation of 'aroint.' 'Stand handsomely' is obscure without explanation. As Halliwell points out in his *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*, it is a milkmaid's injunction, accompanied by a push, to a cow to move aside so that she can have space for her milking stool and pail.

'Rooky wood.' See *Macbeth*, III. ii. 51. Meaning uncertain, but Tennyson uses 'roky' for misty in *The Last Tournament*.

'Shandy.' 'Eccentricity and singularity of temper belonged to all the Shandy family by virtue of their blood.'—*Tristram Shandy*, vol. i, chap. 21.]

474. TO MRS. VINCENT NOVELLO

[Dated at end: *24th May 1823*.]

MADONA,

We agree to your proposal with this difference, that the viands shall be entirely of your providing—let me suggest that the wine shall be *orange* and the pye will be seasoned—and that the coach shall be our affair. I must meet you at the Gallery between three and four,—but Mary goes with you, and you will see her before the day appointed.

Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

Saturday 24 May
Anno Salvationis Nostrae 1823.

475. TO BERNARD BARTON

[Dated at end: *5th June 1823*.]

DEAR SIR,

I am up to my elbows in business—not a choice phrase, but I have no time to pick—clearing away office work, in order to get off smoothly for a month into the country. I set off tomorrow for Hastings, or Hampton I don't know which. I shall think of you at the desk, to enhance my pleasure, and feel an insolent compassion.

I like friend Lockwood very much, and have begged his acceptᵉᵉ of the Doctrinals, which (1090 Pages) I have waded thro', without feeling it a loss of time. I found your system in them, tho' not formally drawn out & made a Creed of. I admire how consistent it is from Page first to last. It seems all born at the

beginning perfect. One thing I wondered at (if I did not miss it) that there is nothing against Slavery, tho' G. F. was in the West Indies. And one thing I smiled at, that, tho' he perpetually cries down the Languages (which he prettily girds by the allusion to Pilate setting them up, viz 'Hebrew Greek & Latin over our Savior on the Cross') yet once in support of his opinion he starts a contested Text & maintains it by the authority of *Epiphanius's Commentary* on the Greek Text. What could he mean by fancying the Grand Turk would read his appeals? Did he send them in English? he quotes the Alcoran too upon him Page so & so, which I suppose means in the Translation. But these incuriæ excepted, which only proves, like the apostles, G. F. was not always fully inspired, I think his by far the best Exposition of Xtianity, & the Quakers the only *Professors*. Your critique on Lloyd is accurate & not a bit too much. Your reasons for epistolary fervors cooling mostly just, yet I think you have not at last quite hit the nail upon the head. W. L. brings this, and so you will excuse brevity once more. Believe me with best regards—

Your about-to-rusticate friend

C. LAMB.

[W. Lockwood would be a Quaker friend of Barton's, probably living at Woodbridge.

'The Doctrinals.' *Gospel Truths . . . A Collection of Doctrinal Books by George Fox, 1706.*

'Nothing against slavery.' The first petition to the House of Commons for the abolition of the slave-trade came from the Quakers in 1783.

'The Grand Turk.' A Quakeress actually travelled to the East to convert the Turks, and returned unmolested.

'Incuriæ.' Pieces of carelessness. Lamb doubtless derived the word from Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 352: 'Maculis . . . quas incuria fudit,' blots inattention has let drop.

'Quakers the only *Professors*.' Lamb was opposed, like Fox, to sacerdotalism and formal ceremonial. He did not preserve his early ardour for the Unitarianism of Priestley (see vol. i, pages 11, 78, 87), and acquired the vaguer creed which Pater in his *Appreciations* calls 'the religion of men of letters.' Sundays were trying to him (see vol. iii, pages 238 and 324). 'Professors' was a term used by Bunyan for acknowledged Christians.

'Your critique on Lloyd.' Barton had presumably read and written about the 'sort of Quaker poem' by Lloyd, a copy of which Lamb was expecting to receive at the end of Letter 470, page 385.]

476. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

[No date: *1823*.]

I am going out of town for a month; you should have had this before, but I have been at Dalston where the Book was not.

Farewell. You to the Desk
I to the Green Sea.

C. L.

[This note is pasted in a copy of *John Woodvil*: 'To T. B. Dibdin from the Author'—'T' being Lamb's mistake.

Lamb went to the 'green sea,' and apparently disliked it very much, year after year. This was the Hastings year.]

477. MARY LAMB TO MRS. RANDAL NORRIS

Hastings, at Mrs. Gibbs, York Cottage,
Priory, No. 4. [*18th June 1823*.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Day after day has passed away, and my brother has said, 'I will write to Mrs. [? Mr.] Norris to-morrow,' and therefore I am resolved to write to *Mrs. Norris* to-day, and trust him no longer. We took our places for Sevenoaks, intending to remain there all night in order to see Knole, but when we got there we chang'd our minds, and went on to Tunbridge Wells. About a mile short of the Wells the coach stopped at a little inn, and I saw, 'Lodgings to let' on a little, very little house opposite. I ran over the way, and secured them before the coach drove away, and we took immediate possession: it proved a very comfortable place, and we remained there nine days. The first evening, as we were wandering about, we met a lady, the wife of one of the India House clerks, with whom we had been slightly acquainted some years ago, which slight acquaintance has been ripened into a great intimacy during the nine pleasant days that we passed at the Wells. She and her two daughters went with us in an open chaise to Knole, and as the chaise held only five, we mounted Miss James upon a little horse, which she rode famously. I was very much pleased with Knole, and still more with Penshurst, which we also visited. We saw Frant and the Rocks, and made much use of your Guide Book, only Charles lost his way once going by

the map. We were in constant exercise the whole time, and spent our time so pleasantly that when we came here on Monday we missed our new friends and found ourselves very dull. We are by the seaside in a *still less* house, and we have exchanged a very pretty landlady for a very ugly one, but she is equally attractive to us. We eat turbot, and we drink smuggled Hollands, and we walk up hill and down hill all day long. In the little intervals of rest that we allow ourselves I teach Miss James French; she picked up a few words during her foreign Tour with us, and she has had a hankering after it ever since.

We came from Tunbridge Wells in a Postchaise, and would have seen Battle Abbey on the way, but it is only shewn on a Monday. We are trying to coax Charles into a Monday's excursion. And Bexhill we are also thinking about. Yesterday evening we found out by chance the most beautiful view I ever saw. It is called 'The Lovers' Seat.' . . . You have been here, therefore you must have seen [it, or] is it only Mr. and Mrs. Faint who have visited Hastings? [Tell Mrs.] Faint that though in my haste to get housed I d[id not take Al] . . . ice's lodgings, yet it comforted all th[ree of us] to know that I had a place in view.

I suppose you are so busy that it is not fair to ask you to write me a line to say how you are going on. Yet if any one of you have half an hour to spare for that purpose, it will be most thankfully received. Charles joins with me in love to you all together, and to each one in particular upstairs and downstairs.

Yours most affectionately,

M. LAMB.

June 18

[Miss James was Mary Lamb's nurse. Mrs. Randal Norris had been a Miss Faint.

There is a curious similarity between a passage in this letter and one in one of Byron's, written from Hastings in 1814: 'I have been swimming, and eating turbot, and smuggling neat brandies, and silk handkerchiefs . . . and walking on cliffs, and tumbling down hills.'

A Hastings guide-book for 1825 gives Mrs. Gibbs's address as 4 York Cottages, near Priory Bridge. Near by, in Pelham Place, a Mr. Hogsflesh had a lodging-house. York Cottages no longer exist. The Lovers' Seat is a niche in the cliffs near Fairlight Glen. Lamb refers to it again when writing to Dibdin in 1826. In the *Elia* essay on 'The Old Margate Hoy' he runs

down Hastings: 'I love town or country; but this detestable Cinque Port is neither.' He was, however, attracted by its smugglers.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Possibly the "wife of one of the India House clerks" was Mrs. Marter, as Marter lived at Knockholt, near Sevenoaks.']

478. CHARLES LAMB TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *10th July 1823.*]

DEAR SIR,

I shall be happy to read the MS. and to forward it, but T. and H. must judge for themselves of publication. If it prove interesting (as I doubt not) I shall not spare to say so, you may depend upon it. Suppose you direct it to Accots. Office, India House.

I am glad you have met with some sweetening circumstances to your unpalateable draught. I have just returned from Hastings, where are exquisite views and walks, and where I have given up my soul to walking, and I am now suffering sedentary contrasts. I am a long time reconciling to Town after one of these excursions. Home is become strange, and will remain so yet a while. Home is the most unforgiving of friends and always resents Absence; I know its old cordial looks will return, but they are slow in clearing up. That is one of the features of this *our* galley slavery, that peregrination ended makes things worse. I felt out of water (with all the sea about me) at Hastings, and just as I had learned to domiciliate there, I must come back to find a home which is no home. I abused Hastings, but learned its value. There are spots, inland bays, etc., which realise the notions of Juan Fernandez.

The best thing I lit upon by accident was a small country church (by whom or when built unknown) standing bare and single in the midst of a grove, with no house or appearance of habitation within a quarter of a mile, only passages diverging from it thro' beautiful woods to so many farm houses. There it stands, like the first idea of a church, before parishioners were thought of, nothing but birds for its congregation, or like a Hermit's oratory (the Hermit dead), or a mausoleum, its effect singularly impressive, like a church found in a desert isle to startle Crusoe with a home image; you must make out a vicar

and a congregation from fancy, for surely none come there. Yet it wants not its pulpit, and its font, and all the seemly additaments of *our* worship.

Southey has attacked Elia on the score of infidelity, in the Quarterly Article, 'Progress of Infidels [Infidelity].' I had not, nor have, seen the Monthly. He might have spared an old friend such a construction of a few careless flights, that meant no harm to religion. If all his UNGUARDED expressions on the subject were to be collected——

but I love and respect Southey—and will not retort. I HATE HIS REVIEW, and his being a Reviewer.

The hint he has droppd will knock the sale of the book on the head, which was almost at a stop before.

Let it stop. There is corn in Egypt, while there is cash at Leadenhall. You and I are something besides being Writers. Thank God.

Yours truly C. L.

[What the MS. was I do not know. Lamb recurs more fully to the description of the little church—no doubt Hollington Rural, about three miles north-west from the town—in later letters to Hood and Dibdin.

'Southey has attacked Elia.' In an article in the *Quarterly* for January 1823, in a review of a work by Grégoire on Deism in France, under the title 'The Progress of Infidelity,' Southey had a reference to *Elia* in the following terms:

> Unbelievers have not always been honest enough thus to express their real feelings; but this we know concerning them, that when they have renounced their birthright of hope, they have not been able to divest themselves of fear. From the nature of the human mind this might be presumed, and in fact it is so. They may deaden the heart and stupify the conscience, but they cannot destroy the imaginative faculty. There is a remarkable proof of this in *Elia's Essays*, a book which wants only a sounder religious feeling, to be as delightful as it is original.

And then Southey went on to draw attention to the case of Thornton Hunt, the little child of Leigh Hunt, the (to Southey) notorious free-thinker, who, as Lamb had stated in the essay 'Witches, and Other Night Fears,' would wake at night in terror of images of fear.

'I will not retort.' Lamb changed his mind, and wrote the famous letter to R. S. about Westminster Abbey.

'Almost at a stop before.' *Elia* was never popular until long after Lamb's death. It did not reach a second edition until 1835.]

479. TO MARY HAZLITT

24 July, 1823.

DEAR MISS HAZLITT,

Mary is very much busied about moving. We are exchanging our two residences for a Cottage at Islington with a large garden, having pears, gooseberries, grapes (these latter ripen once in three years), cabbages (they are always bearing and good for nothing), carrots &c. &c.

She has no time to write, but begs me to say we shall read the Manuscript with pleasure. Pray send it to me at the India House. Your scrap of Latin was pleasant but neither you nor I excell in Latinity. Our kindest rembces to father and mother. Two or three weeks hence will be better to send the manuscript, we shall then read it in our garden. Vale, et Vive memor nostrum.

CHS. LAMB.

[Mary Hazlitt was the daughter of John Hazlitt and therefore the essayist's niece.]

480. TO BERNARD BARTON

[Dated at end: *2nd September* (1823).]

DEAR B. B.,

What will you say to my not writing? You cannot say I do not write now. Hessey has not used your kind sonnet, nor have I seen it. Pray send me a Copy. Neither have I heard any more of your Friend's MS., which I will reclaim, whenever you please. When you come Londonward you will find me no longer in Covt Gard. I have a Cottage, in Colebrook row, Islington. A cottage, for it is detach'd; a white house, with 6 good rooms; the New River (rather elderly by this time) runs (if a moderate walking pace can be so termed) close to the foot of the house; and behind is a spacious garden, with vines (I assure you), pears, strawberries, parsnips, leeks, carrots, cabbages, to delight the heart of old Alcinous. You enter without passage into a cheerful dining room, all studded over and rough with old Books, and above is a lightsome Drawing room, 3 windows, full of choice prints. I feel like a great Lord, never having had a house before.

The London I fear falls off.—I linger among its creaking rafters,

like the last rat. It will topple down, if they don't get some Buttresses. They have pull'd down three, W. Hazlitt, Proctor, and their best stay, kind light hearted Wainwright—their Janus. The best is, neither of our fortunes is concern'd in it.

I heard of you from Mr. Pulham this morning, and that gave a fillip to my Laziness, which has been intolerable. But I am so taken up with pruning and gardening, quite a new sort of occupation to me. I have gather'd my Jargonels, but my Windsor Pears are backward. The former were of exquisite raciness. I do now sit under my own vine, and contemplate the growth of vegetable nature. I can now understand in what sense they speak of FATHER ADAM. I recognise the paternity, while I watch my tulips. I almost FELL with him, for the first day I turned a drunken gard'ner (as he let in the serpent) into my Eden, and he laid about him, lopping off some choice boughs, etc., which hung over from a neighbor's garden, and in his blind zeal laid waste a shade, which had sheltered their window from the gaze of passers by. The old gentlewoman (fury made her not handsome) could scarcely be reconciled by all my fine words. There was no buttering her parsnips. She talk'd of the Law. What a lapse to commit on the first day of my happy 'garden-state.'

I hope you transmitted the Fox-Journal to its Owner with suitable thanks.

Mr. Cary, the Dante-man, dines with me to-day. He is a model of a country Parson, lean (as a Curate ought to be), modest, sensible, no obtruder of church dogmas, quite a different man from Southey, you would like him.

Pray accept this for a Letter, and believe me with sincere regards

Yours C. L.

2 Sept.

[It is worth noting that Lamb at last drops the formality of 'My dear Sir,' and calls his new friend 'B. B.,' but he quickly reverts to the old style.

'Your kind sonnet.' Barton's well-known sonnet to Elia (already quoted) had been printed in the *London Magazine* long before—in the previous February. The reference seems to be to a new one.

Colebrook Cottage, which the Lambs occupied from 1823 to 1827, still stands (1935), with new commercial surroundings, but it has been converted into tenements and the New River has been covered in and enclosed.

Barton was so attracted by one at least of Lamb's similes that, I fancy, he

borrowed it for an account of his grandfather's house at Tottenham, which he wrote some time later; for I find that gentleman's garden described as 'equal to that of old Alcinous.' Alcinous, in the *Odyssey*, had a great orchard full of fruit trees. According to Mrs. Novello, Lamb had only one pear-tree.

'Mr. Pulham.' Brook Pulham of the India House, who made the caricature etching of Elia.

'While I watch my tulips.' Lamb is, of course, embroidering here, but we have it on the authority of George Daniel, the antiquary, that with his removal to Colebrook Cottage began an interest in horticulture, particularly in roses.]

481. TO JAMES KENNEY

[No date: *? September 1823.*]

DEAR LAD,

I send a book for friend Howard, and shall have one for thee, when I shall receive a certificate from the Curè of your parish, that you have in your possession my two other volumes. Keepsakes are good for nothing but as they are kept. Books lent ought also to be returned, which was not the case with a No. of the London you abstracted last visit. But rest you merry, I do not send so far to chide, but to say I regret Mrs. K. & you went off so abruptly without viewing my Colebrook Cottage. It is the most original thing of the sort you ever saw, with a garden larger than yours, a genuine pot-herb garden, so much better than flowers & such trifles. Cabbages, leeks, parsnips, carrots &c.—I do think it the most exactly fitted to my notion of a house, of any in Europe. The New River floweth majestically in front, yielding a sweet & wholesome water, being left a little to stand. I am Lord of (1st time in my life) a dunghill. I walk and admire the vegetable kingdom, with wasps, cats, spiders, & ten thousand little creatures that haunt gardens about me. It is pretty to see Arachne weaving her fine silks from gooseberry tree to currant; sometimes lurking among vines, not at first sight easy to be distinguished from the purple fruit. Vines I have, I assure you, and little grapes, & six garden glasses for cauliflowers. I am as rich as Alcinous: if you do not know who he was, he was a great Market Gardner, and had a [? fruit stall] in Stocks Market in the latter end of the reign of Charles 2d.

Well the Post is going—Good bye, salute for me my little

RACHEL LEAH & shake hands for me with the Elder Lasses, Mrs. Kenny you may kiss for me, if you like—or for yourself.—

Yours Ever

C. LAMB

Pray tell Mr. Grattan I sh[d] have been better pleased if he had taken a meal with me. I hope he will do so another time.

482. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[Dated at end: *6th September* (1823).]

DEAR ALSOP,

I am snugly seated at the cottage; Mary is well but weak, and comes home on *Monday*; she will soon be strong enough to see her friends here. In the mean time will you dine with me at ½ past four to-morrow? Ayrton and M. Burney are coming.

Colebrook Cottage, left hand side, end of Colebrook Row on the western brink of the New River, a detach'd whitish house.

No answer is required but come if you can. C. LAMB.

Saturday 6th Sep.

I call'd on you on Sunday. Resp[cts] to Mrs. A. & boy.

483. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[P.M. *9th September 1823*.]

MY DEAR A.,

I am going to ask you to do me the greatest favour which a man can do to another. I want to make my will, and to leave my property in trust for my sister. *N.B.* I am not *therefore* going to die.—Would it be unpleasant for you to be named for one? The other two I shall beg the same favor of are Talfourd and Proctor. If you feel reluctant, tell me, and it sha'n't abate one jot of my friendly feeling toward you.

Yours ever, C. LAMB.

E. I. House, Aug. [i.e. Sept.] 9, 1823.

[This project may, however, have been postponed. The only will of Lamb's that is known, and was proved, was made in 1830, as we shall see, and the executors were Talfourd and Charles Ryle.]

484. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[P.M. *10th September 1823.*]

MY DEAR A.,

Your kindness in accepting my request no words of mine can repay. It has made you overflow into some romance which I should have check'd at another time. I hope it may be in the scheme of Providence that my sister may go first (if ever so little a precedence), myself next, and my good Exrs survive to remembr us with kindness many years. God bless you.

I will set Proctor about the will forthwith. C. LAMB.

[The following is an extract from a letter from Mary Shelley to Leigh Hunt, 9th September 1823:

This same evening (Saturday, 30th August), on my return to the Strand, I saw Lamb, who was very entertaining and amiable, though a little deaf. . . . Lamb said one thing, which I am sure will give you pleasure. He corrected for Hazlitt a new edition of *Elegant Extracts*, in which living poets are included. He said he was much pleased with many of your things, with a little of Montgomery and a little of Crabbe. Scott he found tiresome, Byron had many fine things, but was tiresome, but yours appeared to him the freshest and best of all. These extracts have never been published; they have been offered to Mr. Hunter; and seeing the book at his house I had the curiosity to look at what the extracts were that pleased Lamb. There was the canto of the Fatal Passion from *Rimini*, several things from *Foliage* and from *Amyntas*. L. mentioned also your 'Conversations with Coleridge,' and was much pleased with it. He was very gracious to me, and invited me to see him when Miss L. should be well.]

485. TO A CORRESPONDENT UNKNOWN

10th September (1823).

I write in great haste, surrounded with office business, to thank you for the spirited little call upon Neptune, whom you invoked to cheerful purpose. I will send it to the London Magazine, but have no control over what goes in it, though some interest. I fear it is a little too late. My letters do not come free, but you will affront me, more than you have obliged me, by talking of reimbursing a shilling or so.

I have not heard from the Wordsworths lately.

[In 'The Lion's Head' for November Hood inserts the paragraph: 'Elia requests us to say, he is not the Lion some of his correspondents take him for.'

In the same department for December there is a jocular commentary on De Quincey's *Letters to a Young Gentleman whose Education has been Neglected*, beginning: 'Can Neptune sleep?—Is Willich dead?' This may be the 'spirited little call' to which Lamb refers.]

486. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[P.M. *17th September 1823*.]

DEAR A.,

Your Cheese is the best I ever tasted; Mary will tell you so hereafter. She is at home, but has disappointed me. She has gone back rather than improved. However, she has sense enough to value the present, for she is greatly fond of Stilton. Yours is the delicatest rain-bow-hued melting piece I ever flavoured. Believe me, I took it the more kindly, following so great a kindness.

Depend upon't, yours shall be one of the first houses we shall present ourselves at, when we have got our Bill of Health.

Being both yours and Mrs. Allsop's truly. C. L. & M. L.

[C. C. Clarke to Leigh Hunt, 20th September 1823: '[Lamb's] spirits have lately been sadly clouded by a return of his sister's mysterious malady; you are no doubt acquainted with its nature.']

487. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *17th September 1823*.]

DEAR SIR,

I have again been reading your stanzas on Bloomfield, which are the most appropriate that can be imagined, sweet with doric delicacy. I like that

> Our more chaste Theocritus—

just hinting at the fault of the Grecian. I love that stanza ending with

> Words phrases fashions pass away
> But Truth and nature live through all.

But I shall omit in my own copy the one stanza which alludes to Lord B. I suppose. It spoils the sweetness and oneness of the feeling. Cannot we think of Burns, or Thompson, without sullying the thought with a reflection out of place upon Lord

Rochester? These verses might have been inscribed upon a tomb; are in fact an epitaph; satire does not look pretty upon a tombstone. Besides, there is a quotation in it, always bad in verse; seldom advisable in prose.

I doubt if their having been in a Paper will not prevent T. and H. from insertion, but I shall have a thing to send in a day or two, and shall try them. Omitting that stanza, a *very little* alteration is wants in the beginns of the next. You see, I use freedom. How happily (I flatter not!) you have brot in his subjects; and, (*I suppose*) his favorite measure, though I am not acquainted with any of his writings but the Farmer's Boy. He dined with me once, and his manners took me exceedingly.

I rejoyce that you forgive my long silence. I continue to estimate my own-roof comforts highly. How could I remain all my life a lodger! My garden thrives (I am told) tho' I have yet reaped nothing but some tiny sallad, and withered carrots. But a garden's a garden anywhere, and twice a garden in London.

Somehow I cannot relish that word Horkey. Cannot you supply it by circumlocution, and direct the reader by a note to explain that it means the Horkey. But Horkey choaks me in the Text. It raises crowds of mean associations, Hawking and sp——g, Gauky, Stalky, Maukin. The sound is every thing, in such dulcet modulations 'specially. I like

Gilbert Meldrum's sterner tones,

without knowing who Gilbert Meldrum is. You have slipt in your rhymes as if they grew there, so natural-artificially, or artificial-naturally. There's a vile phrase.

Do you go on with your Quaker Sonnets—[to] have 'em ready with Southey's Book of the Church? I meditate a letter to S. in the London, which perhaps will meet the fate of the Sonnet.

Excuse my brevity, for I write painfully at office, liable to 100 callings off. And I can never sit down to an epistle elsewhere. I read or walk. If you return this letter to the Post Office, I think they will return 4d, seeing it is but half a one. Believe me tho' entirely yours C. L.

['Doric delicacy.' From a letter of Sir H. Wotton to Milton, published in the edition of *Comus*, 1645.

Barton's *Verses to the Memory of Bloomfield, the Suffolk Poet* (who died in August

1823), were printed in book form in his *Poetic Vigils*, 1824. This is the stanza that Lamb most liked:

> It is not quaint and local terms
> Besprinkled o'er thy rustic lay,
> Though well such dialect confirms
> Its powers unletter'd minds to sway,
> It is not *these* that most display
> Thy sweetest charms, thy gentlest thrall,—
> Words, phrases, fashions, pass away,
> But TRUTH and NATURE live through all.

The stanza referring to Byron was not reprinted, nor was the word Horkey, which means Harvest Home in Suffolk. The allusion, in B. B. and so here, is to Bloomfield's poem *The Horkey, a Provincial Ballad*, in *Wild Flowers*, 1806. Meldrum is in the same volume of Bloomfield's.

'Quaker Sonnets.' Barton did not carry out this project. Southey's *Book of the Church* was published in 1824.

'I meditate a letter to S.' The 'Letter of Elia to Mr. Southey' was published in the *London Magazine* for October 1823.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'This shows that Lamb sometimes did not send in his articles even till after the 18th, since on the 17th he was still only meditating the letter to S., and hadn't sent it in yet.']

488. TO CHARLES OLLIER

[No date: *Autumn 1823*.]

DEAR OLLIER,

I am sorry I have no power in what you desire of me. The situations (to the very lowest) at the E I H are alone in the Directors' hands, with whom I have no intercourse. Perhaps Peacock may have more.

What is gone of my 'Works'? Has any one bought 'em? I only ask because I want half a dozen copies to give away, which I should like to have gratis or cheap. I am as you see removed, but I will find you out at Maida Hill soon, or hope to see you here.

Yours as ever

C. L.

Colebrook Cottage! Colbrook row, Islington.

[The *East India Register and Directory* for 1823 tells us that at that time Thomas Love Peacock was one of the Assistants to the Examiner of Indian Correspondence. This is Lamb's only reference to his colleague; but there is a story that at one of the annual banquets where they were sitting contiguously Lamb

pointed to a very large egg in the salad bowl, and remarked pleasantly that it was the kind that 'a drunken peacock would lay.'

Since we are being convivial, I might put here an undated scrap added by Lamb to a letter from his sister, probably to Miss Hutchinson:]

489. TO MISS HUTCHINSON (?)

(Fragment)

Apropos of birds—the other day at a large dinner, being call'd upon for a toast, I gave, as the best toast I knew, 'Wood-cock toast,' which was drunk with 3 cheers.

Yours affecty

C. LAMB.

490. TO CHARLES LLOYD

(Fragment)

[No date: *Autumn 1823.*]

Your lines are not to be understood reading on one leg. They are *sinuous*, and to be won with wrestling. I assure you in sincerity that nothing you have done has given me greater satisfaction. Your obscurity, where you are dark, which is seldom, is that of too much meaning, not the painful obscurity which no toil of the reader can dissipate; not the dead vacuum and floundering place in which imagination finds no footing; it is not the dimness of positive darkness, but of distance; and he that reads and not discerns must get a better pair of spectacles. I admire every piece in the collection; I cannot say the first is best; when I do so, the last read rises up in judgment. To your Mother—to your Sister—to Mary dead—they are all weighty with thought and tender with sentiment. Your poetry is like no other:—those cursed Dryads and Pagan trumperies of modern verse have put me out of conceit of the very name of poetry. Your verses are as good and as wholesome as prose; and I have made a sad blunder if I do not leave you with an impression that your present is rarely valued.

CHARLES LAMB.

[This scrap is in *Selections from the Poems and Letters of Bernard Barton*, 1849, edited by Edward FitzGerald and Lucy Barton. Lloyd says: 'I had a very

ample testimony from C. Lamb to the character of my last little volume. I will transcribe to you what he says, as it is but a note, and his manner is always so original, that I am sure the introduction of the merest trifle from his pen will well compensate for the absence of anything of mine.' The volume was *Poems*, 1823, one of the chief of which was *Stanzas on the Difficulty with which, in Youth, we Bring Home to our Habitual Consciousness, the Idea of Death*, to which Lloyd appended the following sentence from Elia's essay on 'New Year's Eve,' as motto: 'Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself, any more than in a hot June, we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December.'

'Reading on one leg.' See note to the letter to Wordsworth, 7th June 1819.]

491. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

Saturday, 4 October, 1823.

DEAR SIR,

Will Mrs. A. and you dine with us to-morrow at half past 3? Do not think of troubling yourself to send (if you cannot come), as we shall provide only a goose (which is in the House), and your not coming will make no difference in our arrangements.

Your obliged,

C. LAMB.

492. TO THE REV. HENRY FRANCIS CARY

India Office, *14th Oct., 1823.*

DEAR SIR,

If convenient, will you give us house room on Saturday next? I can sleep anywhere. If another Sunday suit you better, pray let me know. We were talking of Roast *Shoulder* of Mutton with onion sauce; but I scorn to prescribe to the hospitalities of mine host.

With respects to Mrs. C., yours truly, C. LAMB.

[Cary, who afterwards had an official residence at the British Museum, where he was Assistant Keeper of the Printed Books, was at this time living in Hogarth's house at Chiswick. This being so, we can look upon that house, now preserved as a national memorial, as yet another of those still to be visited in which Lamb set foot.]

493. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

[P.M. *28th October 1823.*]

MY DEAR SIR,

Your Pig was a *picture* of a pig, and your Picture a *pig* of a picture. The former was delicious but evanescent, like a hearty fit of mirth, or the crackling of thorns under a pot; but the latter is an *idea*, and abideth. I never before saw swine upon sattin. And then that pretty strawy canopy about him! he seems to purr (rather than grunt) his satisfaction. Such a gentlemanlike porker too! Morland's are absolutely clowns to it. Who the deuce painted it?

I have ordered a little gilt shrine for it, and mean to wear it for a locket; a shirt-pig.

I admire the petty-toes shrouded in a veil of something, not *mud*, but that warm soft consistency with [? which] the dust takes in Elysium after a spring shower—it perfectly engloves them.

I cannot enough thank you and your country friend for the delicate double present—the Utile et Decorum—three times have I attempted to write this sentence and failed; which shows that I am not cut out for a pedant.

Sir

(as I say to Southey) will you come and see us at our poor cottage of Colebrook to tea tomorrow evening, as early as six? I have some friends coming at that hour—

The panoply which covered your material pig shall be forthcoming, the pig pictorial, with its trappings, domesticate with me.

Your greatly obliged

Tuesdy. ELIA.

['Morland's are . . . clowns to it.' Referring to the many farm scenes of George Morland, where English rural life was made so comfortable and sweet. '*Sir* (as I say to Southey).' Elia's 'Letter to Southey' in the *London Magazine* began thus.]

494. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

[No date: *1st November 1823*.]

DEAR SIR,

Mary has got a cold, and the nights are dreadful; but at the first indication of Spring (*alias* the first dry weather in Novr early) it is our intention to surprise you early some evens.

Believe me, most truly yours,

C. L.

The Cottage, Saturday night.

Mary regrets very much Mrs. Allsop's fruitless visit. It made her swear! She was gone to visit Miss Hutchinsn, whom she found OUT.

495. TO THOMAS ALLSOP

E. I. H., *7th November* [*1823*].

DEAR ALLSOP,

Our dinner-hour on Sundays is four, at which we shall be most happy to see Mrs A. and yourself—I mean next Sunday, but I also mean any Sunday. Pray come. I am up to my very ears in business, but pray come.

Yours most sincerely,

C. L.

496. TO SARAH HAZLITT

[No date: ? *10th November 1823*.]

DEAR MRS. H.,

Sitting down to write a letter is such a painful operation to Mary, that you must accept me as her proxy. You have seen our house. What I now tell you is literally true. Yesterday week George Dyer called upon us, at one o'clock (*bright noon day*) on his way to dine with Mrs. Barbauld at Newington. He sat with Mary about half an hour, and took leave. The maid saw him go out from her kitchen window; but suddenly losing sight of him, ran up in a fright to Mary. G. D., instead of keeping the slip that leads to the gate, had deliberately, staff in hand, in broad open day, marched into the New River. He had not his spectacles on, and you know his absence. Who helped him out, they can hardly tell; but between 'em they got him out, drenched thro' and thro'. A mob collected by that time and accompanied him in. 'Send for the Doctor!' they said: and a one-eyed fellow, dirty and drunk, was fetched from the Public House at the end,

where it seems he lurks, for the sake of picking up water practice, having formerly had a medal from the Humane Society for some rescue. By his advice, the patient was put between blankets; and when I came home at four to dinner, I found G. D. a-bed, and raving, light-headed with the brandy-and-water which the doctor had administered. He sung, laughed, whimpered, screamed, babbled of guardian angels, would get up and go home; but we kept him there by force; and by next morning he departed sobered, and seems to have received no injury. All my friends are open-mouthed about having paling before the river, but I cannot see that, because a . . . lunatic chooses to walk into a river with his eyes open at midday, I am any the more likely to be drowned in it, coming home at midnight.

I had the honour of dining at the Mansion House on Thursday last, by special card from the Lord Mayor, who never saw my face, nor I his; and all from being a writer in a magazine! The dinner costly, served on massy plate, champagne, pines, &c.; forty-seven present, among whom the Chairman and two other directors of the India Company. There's for you! and got away pretty sober! Quite saved my credit!

We continue to like our house prodigiously. Does Mary Hazlitt go on with her novel, or has she begun another? I would not discourage her, tho' we continue to think it (so far) in its present state not saleable.

Our kind remembrances to her and hers and you and yours.—

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate.

[Addressed] Mrs. Hazlitt, Alphington, near Exeter.

[This letter is the first draft of the *Elia* essay, 'Amicus Redivivus,' which was printed in the *London Magazine* in December 1823. George Dyer, who was then sixty-eight, had been getting blind steadily for some years. A visit to Lamb's cottage to-day, bearing in mind that the ribbon of green between iron railings that extends along the street was at that time an open stream, will make the nature of G. D.'s misadventure quite plain.

'I am pleased that H. liked my letter to the Laureate.' Hazlitt wrote, in the essay 'On the Pleasures of Hating': 'I think I must be friends with Lamb again, since he has written that magnanimous letter to Southey, and told him a piece of his mind!' Coleridge also approved of it, and Crabb Robinson's praise was excessive.]

497. TO MARY SHELLEY

November 12, 1823.

DEAR MRS. S.,

Our friends from Shacklewell drink tea on Saturday at six; we shall have much pleasure in your joining them.

Yours truly

[*Signature cut off.*]

G. Dyer walk'd into the New River on Sunday week at one o'clock in the daytime! with his eyes open. Mind how you come.

498. TO ROBERT SOUTHEY

E. I. H., *21st November, 1823.*

DEAR SOUTHEY,

The kindness of your note has melted away the mist which was upon me. I have been fighting against a shadow. That accursed 'Quarterly Review' had vexed me by a gratuitous speaking, of its own knowledge, that the 'Confessions of a Drunkard' was a genuine description of the state of the writer. Little things, that are not ill meant, may produce much ill. *That* might have injured me alive and dead. I am in a public office, and my life is insured. I was prepared for anger, and I thought I saw, in a few obnoxious words, a hard case of repetition directed against me. I wished both magazine and review at the bottom of the sea. I shall be ashamed to see you, and my sister (though innocent) will be still more so; for the folly was done without her knowledge, and has made her uneasy ever since. My guardian angel was absent at that time.

I will muster up courage to see you, however, any day next week (Wednesday excepted). We shall hope that you will bring Edith with you. That will be a second mortification. She will hate to see us; but come and heap embers. We deserve it, I for what I've done, and she for being my sister.

Do come early in the day, by sun-light, that you may see my *Milton*.

I am at Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook Row, Islington. A

detached whitish house, close to the New River, end of Colebrook Terrace, left hand from Sadler's Wells.

Will you let me know the day before?

Your penitent C. LAMB.

P.S.—I do not think your handwriting at all like Hunt's. I do not think many things I did think.

[For the right appreciation of this letter Elia's 'Letter to Southey' must be read (see my edition of Lamb's *Works*). It was hard hitting, but Southey, in a reference to Elia, had taken an offensive line of moral superiority and rebuke, and much that was said by Lamb was justified.

Southey's reply, on *19th November 1823*, ran thus:

MY DEAR LAMB—On Monday I saw your letter in the *London Magazine*, which I had not before had an opportunity of seeing, and I now take the first interval of leisure for replying to it.

Nothing could be further from my mind than any intention or apprehension of any way offending or injuring a man concerning whom I have never spoken, thought, or felt otherwise than with affection, esteem, and admiration.

If you had let me know in any private or friendly manner that you felt wounded by a sentence in which nothing but kindness was intended—or that you found it might injure the sale of your book—I would most readily and gladly have inserted a note in the next *Review* to qualify and explain what had hurt you.

You have made this impossible, and I am sorry for it. But I will not engage in controversy with you to make sport for the Philistines.

The provocation must be strong indeed that can rouse me to do this, even with an enemy. And if you can forgive an unintended offence as heartily as I do the way in which you have resented it, there will be nothing to prevent our meeting as we have heretofore done, and feeling towards each other as we have always been wont to do.

Only signify a correspondent willingness on your part, and send me your address, and my first business next week shall be to reach your door, and shake hands with you and your sister. Remember me to her most kindly and believe me—Yours, with unabated esteem and regard,

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

The matter closed with this exchange of letters, and no hostility remained on either side.

Lamb's quarrel with the *Quarterly* began in 1811, when in a review of Weber's edition of Ford he was described as a 'poor maniac.' It was renewed in 1814, when his article on Wordsworth's *Excursion* was mutilated. It broke out again in 1822, as Lamb says here, when a reviewer of Reid's treatise on *Hypochondriasis and other Nervous Affections* (supposed to be Dr. Gooch, a friend of Dr. Henry Southey's) referred to Lamb's 'Confessions of a Drunkard' as being, from his own knowledge, true. Thus Lamb's patience was naturally

at breaking point when his own friend Southey attacked *Elia* a few numbers later.

'I do not think your handwriting at all like Hunt's.' Lamb had said, in the 'Letter,' of Leigh Hunt: 'His handwriting is so much the same with your own, that I have opened more than one letter of his, hoping, nay, not doubting, but it was from you, and have been disappointed (he will bear with my saying so) at the discovery of my error.']

499. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *22nd November 1823*.]

DEAR B. B.,

I am ashamed at not acknowledging your kind little poem, which I must needs like much, but I protest I thought I had done it at the moment. Is it possible a letter has miscarried? Did you get one in which I sent you an extract from the poems of Lord Sterling? I should wonder if you did, for I sent you none such. —There was an incipient LYE strangled in the birth. Some people's conscience is so tender! But in plain truth I thank you very much for the verses. I have a very kind letter from the Laureat, with a self-invitation to come and shake hands with me. This is truly handsome and noble. 'Tis worthy of my OLD IDEA of Southey. Shall not I, think you, be covered with a red suffusion?

You are too much apprehensive of your complaint. I know many that are always ailing of it, and live on to a good old age. I know a merry fellow (you partly know him) who when his Medical Adviser told him he had drunk away all *that part*, congratulated himself (now his liver was gone) that he should be the longest LIVER of the two. The best way in these cases is to keep yourself as ignorant as you can —as ignorant as the world was before Galen—of the entire inner construction of the Animal Man—not to be conscious of a midriff—to hold kidneys (save of sheep and swine) to be an agreeable fiction—not to know whereabouts the gall grows—to account the circulation of the blood an idle whimsey of Harvey's—to acknowledge no mechanism not visible. For, once fix the seat of your disorder, and your fancies flux into it like bad humours. Those medical gentries chuse each his favourite part—one takes the lungs—another the aforesaid liver —and refer to *that* whatever in the animal economy is amiss.

Above all, use exercise, take a little more spirituous liquors, learn to smoke, continue to keep a good conscience, and avoid tampering with hard terms of art—viscosity—schirossity, and those bugbears, by which simple patients are scared into their grave. Believe the general sense of the mercantile world which holds that desks are not deadly. It is the mind, good B. B., and not the limbs, that taints by long sitting. Think of the patience of taylors—think how long the Chancellor sits—think of the Brooding Hen.

I protest I cannot answer thy Sister's kind enquiry, but I judge I shall put forth no second volume. More praise than buy, and T. and H. are not particularly disposed for Martyrs.

Thou wilt see a funny passage, and yet a true History, of George Dyer's Aquatic Incursion in the next 'London.' Beware his fate, when thou comest to see me at my Colebrook Cottage. I have filled my little space with my little thoughts. I wish thee ease on thy sofa, but not too much indulgce. on it. From my poor desk, thy fellow-sufferer this bright November.

C. L.

[Again I do not identify the kind little poem. It may have been a trifle enclosed in a letter, which Barton did not print and Lamb destroyed.]

500. TO WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH

India-House, *9th Dec.*, *1823*.

(If I had time I would go over this letter again, and dot all my *i*'s.)

DEAR SIR,

I should have thanked you for your Books and Compliments sooner, but have been waiting for a revise to be sent, which does not come, tho' I returned the proof on the receit of your letter. I have read Warner with great pleasure. What an elaborate piece of alliteration and antithesis! why it must have been a labour far above the most difficult versification. There is a fine simile of or picture of Semiramis arming to repel a siege. I do not mean to keep the Book, for I suspect you are forming a curious collection, and I do not pretend to any thing of the kind. I have not a Blackletter Book among mine, old Chaucer excepted, and

am not Bibliomanist enough to like Blackletter. It is painful to read. Therefore I must insist on returning it at opportunity, not from contumacity and reluctance to be oblig'd, but because it must suit you better than me. The loss of a present *from* should never exceed the gain of a present *to*. I hold this maxim infallible in the accepting Line. I read your Magazines with satisfaction. I throughly agree with you as to the German Faust, as far [as] I can do justice to it from an English translation. 'Tis a disagreeable canting tale of Seduction, which has nothing to do with the Spirit of Faustus—Curiosity. Was the dark secret to be explored to end in the seducing of a weak girl, which might have been accomplished by earthly agency? When Marlow gives *his* Faustus a mistress, he flies him at Helen, flower of Greece, to be sure, and not at Miss Betsy, or Miss Sally Thoughtless.

> Cut is the branch that bore the goodly fruit,
> And wither'd is Apollo's laurel tree:
> Faustus is dead.

What a noble natural transition from metaphor to plain speaking! as if the figurative had flagged in description of such a Loss, and was reduced to tell the fact simply.—

I must now thank you for your very kind invitation. It is not out of prospect that I may see Manchester some day, and then I will avail myself of your kindness. But Holydays are scarce things with me, and the Laws of attendance are getting stronger and stronger at Leadenhall. But I shall bear it in mind. Meantime something may (more probably) bring you to town, where I shall be happy to see you. I am always to be found (alas!) at my desk in the forepart of the day.

I wonder why they do not send the revise. I leave late at office, and my abode lies out of the way, or I should have seen about it. If you are impatient, Perhaps a Line to the Printer, directing him to send it me, at Accountant's Office, may answer. You will see by the scrawl that I only snatch a few minutes from intermitting Business.

Your oblig. Ser., C. LAMB.

['Warner.' *Albion's England*, by William Warner, published in two parts, 1586 and 1606.

Goethe's *Faust*. Lamb, as we have seen, had read the account of the play in Madame de Staël's *Germany*. He might also have read the translation by

Lord Francis Leveson-Gower, 1823, or the summary in prose and verse with Retzsch's illustrations, 1821. Hayward's translation was not published till 1833. The preface to the second edition is dated 1834. That printed for private circulation notes that the translation was 'first suggested to me by a remark made by Mr. Charles Lamb to an honoured friend of mine' [H. F. Cary]. Lamb had praised the Latin versions of the Greek tragedians. Crabb Robinson told Lamb that Goethe admired his sonnet on his family name.

'Cut is the branch.' From *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus*, by Christopher Marlowe, Act V, Epilogue. The full text is:

> Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight,
> And burned is Apollo's laurel-bough,
> That sometime grew within this learned man.
> Faustus is gone. . . .

'Manchester.' I cannot understand why Lamb should go to Manchester, where Ainsworth then lived, unless possibly on an East India mission concerning cotton.]

501. TO WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH

[Dated at end: *29th (December 1823).*]

MY DEAR SIR,

You talk of months at a time and I know not what inducements to visit Manchester, Heaven knows how gratifying! but I have had my little month of 1823 already. It is all over, and without incurring a disagreeable favor I cannot so much as get a single holyday till the season returns with the next year. Even our half-hour's absences from office are set down in a Book! Next year, if I can spare a day or two of it, I will come to Manchester, but I have reasons at home against longer absences.—

I am so ill just at present—(an illness of my own procuring last night; who is Perfect?)—that nothing but your very great kindness could make me write. I will bear in mind the letter to W. W., you shall have it quite in time, before the 12.

My aking and confused Head warns me to leave off.—With a muddled sense of gratefulness, which I shall apprehend more clearly to-morrow, I remain, your friend unseen,

C. L.

I. H. 29th.

Will your occasions or inclinations bring *you* to London? It will give me great pleasure to show you every thing that Islington can boast, if you know the meaning of that very Cockney sound. We have the New River!

I am asham'd of this scrawl: but I beg you to accept it for the present. I am full of qualms.

A fool at 50 is a fool indeed.

[W. W. was Wordsworth.

'A fool at 50 is a fool indeed.' 'A fool at forty is a fool indeed' is Young's line in Satire II of the series *Love of Fame*. Lamb was nearing forty-nine.

Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Ainsworth wrote to Charles Kent in 1875 that some very characteristic little notes that Lamb sent him had been mislaid, or lost. "One of the earliest communications I received from him when I came to town in 1825 was an invitation to dinner. I was then a pupil of Mr. Jacob Phillips in the Inner Temple, and I had rooms in Devereux Court. Lamb took the trouble to particularize every street and turning between the court and his own abode at Islington, and ended his note thus: 'You *can't* miss your way, but the probability is that you *will*.'"']

502. TO BERNARD BARTON

[*9th January 1824.*]

DEAR B. B.,

Do you know what it is to succumb under an insurmountable day mare—a whoreson lethargy, Falstaff calls it—an indisposition to do any thing, or to be any thing—a total deadness and distaste—a suspension of vitality—an indifference to locality—a numb soporifical goodfornothingness—an ossification all over—an oyster-like insensibility to the passing events—a mind-stupor,—a brawny defiance to the needles of a thrusting-in conscience—did you ever have a very bad cold with a total irresolution to submit to water gruel processes?—this has been for many weeks my lot, and my excuse—my fingers drag heavily over this paper, and to my thinking it is three and twenty furlongs from here to the end of this demi-sheet—I have not a thing to say—nothing is of more importance than another—I am flatter than a denial or a pancake—emptier than Judge Park's wig when the head is in it—duller than a country stage when the actors are off it—a cypher—an O—I acknowledge life at all, only by an occasional convulsional cough, and a permanent phlegmatic pain in the chest—I am weary of the world—Life is weary of me—My day is gone into Twilight and I don't think it worth the expence of candles—my wick hath a thief in it, but I can't muster courage to snuff it—I inhale suffocation—I can't distinguish veal from mutton—nothing interests me—tis 12 o'clock and Thurtell is just now

coming out upon the New Drop—Jack Ketch alertly tucking up his greasy sleeves to do the last office of mortality, yet cannot I elicit a groan or a moral reflection—if you told me the world will be at end tomorrow, I should just say, 'will it?'—I have not volition enough to dot my i's—much less to comb my EYEBROWS —my eyes are set in my head—my brains are gone out to see a poor relation in Moorfields, and they did not say when they'd come back again—my scull is a Grub street Attic, to let—not so much as a joint stool or a crackd jordan left in it—my hand writes, not I, from habit, as chickens run about a little when their heads are off—O for a vigorous fit of gout, cholic, tooth ache—an earwig in my auditory, a fly in my visual organs—pain is life—the sharper, the more evidence of life—but this apathy, this death—did you ever have an obstinate cold, a six or seven weeks' unintermitting chill and suspension of hope, fear, conscience, and every thing—yet do I try all I can to cure it, I try wine, and spirits, and smoking, and snuff in unsparing quantities, but they all only seem to make me worse, instead of better—I sleep in a damp room, but it does me no good; I come home late o' nights, but do not find any visible amendment.

Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

It is just 15 minutes after 12. Thurtell is by this time a good way on his journey, baiting at Scorpion perhaps, Ketch is bargaining for his cast coat and waistcoat, the Jew demurs at first at three half crowns, but on consideration that he may get somewhat by showing 'em in the Town, finally closes.—

C. L.

['Judge Park's wig.' Sir James Alan Park, of the Bench of Common Pleas, who tried Thurtell, the murderer of Mr. William Weare of Lyon's Inn, in Gill's Hill Lane, Radlett, on 24th October 1823. The trial was on 6th and 7th January 1824, and Thurtell was hanged at Hertford on 9th January on a gallows of his own design. Ketch was in those days the dynastic name of our hangmen, after John Ketch, who had beheaded Monmouth. The dead man's clothes were a perquisite of the office.

'Baiting at Scorpion.' The zodiacal sign, passed *en route* to the next world.

On 10th January 1824 Crabb Robinson walked to Islington to see Miss Lamb, while her brother was at the India House, and looked over the library of 'shabby books.']

503. TO CHARLES OLLIER

DEAR OLLIER, [Dated at end: *Islington, 13th January 1824.*]

We shall be happy to see you on Monday as early as you can. Hunt & the Novellos will be with us. Follow the New River from Sadlerswells and it brings you to our house, or come to Camden Street, Islington Green—at the very end of Camden Street is the New River, turn up close by the River (left hand) & you come to the Cottage. If you feel obscure, ask at Public House, end of Camden St. divil's in it if this map misleads.

Yours Truly

C LAMB

Colebrook Cottage, Colebrook row, Islington.

Mr. Ollier, Mr. Colburn's (?), Near Burlington Street.

504. TO BERNARD BARTON

MY DEAR SIR, [P.M. *23rd January 1824.*]

That peevish letter of mine, which was meant to convey an apology for my incapacity to write, seems to have been taken by you in too serious a light. It was only my way of telling you I had a severe cold. The fact is I have been insuperably dull and lethargic for many weeks, and cannot rise to the vigour of a Letter, much less an Essay. The London must do without me for a time, a time, and half a time, for I have lost all interest about it, and whether I shall recover it again I know not. I will bridle my pen another time, & not teaze and puzzle you with my aridities. I shall begin to feel a little more alive with the spring. Winter is to me (mild or harsh) always a great trial of the spirits. I am ashamed not to have noticed your tribute to Woolman, whom we love so much. It is done in your good manner. Your friend Tayler called upon me some time since, and seems a very amiable man. His last story is painfully fine. His Book I 'like.' It is only too stuft with scripture, too Parsonish. The best thing in it is the Boy's own story. When I say it is too full of Scripture, I mean it is too full of direct quotations; no book can have too much of SILENT SCRIPTURE in it. But the natural power of a story is diminished when the uppermost purpose in the writer seems to be to recommend something else, viz Religion.

You know what Horace says of the DEUS INTERSIT. I am not able to explain myself, you must do it for me.—

My Sister's part in the Leicester School (about two thirds) was purely her own; as it was (to the same quantity) in the Shakspeare Tales which bear my name. I wrote only the Witch Aunt, the first going to Church, and the final Story about a little Indian girl in a Ship.

Your account of my Black Balling amused me. *I think, as Quakers, they did right.* There are some things hard to be understood.

The more I think the more I am vexed at having puzzled you with that Letter, but I have been so out of Letter writing of late years, that it is a sore effort to sit down to it, & I felt in your debt, and sat down waywardly to pay you in bad money. Never mind my dulness, I am used to long intervals of it. The heavens seem brass to me—then again comes the refreshing shower. 'I have been merry once or twice ere now.'

You said something about Mr. Mitford in a late letter, which I believe I did not advert to. I shall be happy to show him my Milton (it is all the show things I have) at any time he will take the trouble of a jaunt to Islington. I do also hope to see Mr. Taylor there some day. Pray say so to both.

Coleridge's book is good part printed, but sticks a little for *more copy*. It bears an unsaleable Title, Extracts from Bishop Leighton, but I am confident there will be plenty of good notes in it, more of Bishop Coleridge than Leighton, I hope, for what is Leighton?

Do you trouble yourself about Libel cases? The Decision against Hunt for the 'Vision of Judgment' made me sick. What is to become of the old talk about OUR GOOD OLD KING—his personal virtues saving us from a revolution &c. &c. Why, none that think it can utter it now. It must stink. And the Vision is really, as to—Him-ward, such a tolerant good humour'd thing. What a wretched thing a Lord Chief Justice is, always was, & will be!

Keep your good spirits up, dear B B—mine will return—They are at present in abeyance. But I am rather lethargic than miserable. I don't know but a good horse whip would be more beneficial to me than Physic. My head, without aching, will teach yours to ache. It is well I am getting to the conclusion.

I will send a better letter when I am a better man. Let me thank you for your kind concern for me (which I trust will have reason soon to be dissipated) & assure you that it gives me pleasure to hear from you.—

Yours truly C. L.

['The London must do without me.' Lamb contributed nothing between December 1823 ('Amicus Redivivus') and September 1824 ('Blakesmoor in H——shire').

Barton's tribute to Woolman was the poem *A Memorial to John Woolman*, printed in *Poetic Vigils*.

Tayler was Charles Benjamin Tayler (1797–1875), the curate of Hadleigh, in Suffolk, and the author of many religious books. Lamb refers to *May You Like It*, 1823.

'What Horace says':

Nec deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit. *Ars Poetica*, 191–2.

Neither let a god interfere, unless a difficulty worth a god's unravelling should happen (Smart's translation).

'My Black Balling.' *Elia* had been rejected by a book club in Woodbridge.

'The heavens seem brass.' 'The heaven o'er my head seems made of molten brass.'—Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, IV. ii.

'Coleridge's book.' The *Aids to Reflection*, 1825. The first intention had been a selection of 'Beauties' from Bishop Leighton (1611–84), Archbishop of Glasgow, and author, among other works, of *Rules and Instructions for a Holy Life*.

'The Decision against Hunt.' John Hunt, the publisher of the *Liberal*, in which Byron's *Vision of Judgment* had been printed in 1822, had just been fined £100 for the libel therein contained on George III.]

505. TO CHARLES OLLIER

[*27th January 1824.*]

DEAR OLLIER,

Many thanks from both of us for *Inesilla*. I wished myself younger, that I might have more enjoyed the terror of that desolate city, and the damned palace. I think it is as fine as any thing in its way, and wish you joy of success, &c.

With better weather, I shall hope to see you at Islington.

Meantime, believe me,

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Scribbled midst official flurry.

506. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *25th February 1824.*]

MY DEAR SIR,

Your title of Poetic Vigils arrides me much more than A Volume of Verse, which is no meaning. The motto says nothing, but I cannot suggest a better. I do not like mottoes but where they are singularly felicitous; there is foppery in them. They are unplain, un-Quakerish. They are good only where they flow from the Title, and are a kind of justification of it. There is nothing about watchings or lucubrations in the one you suggest, no commentary on Vigils. By the way, a wag would recommend you to the Line of Pope

Sleepless himself—to give his readers sleep—

I by no means wish it. But it may explain what I mean, that a neat motto is child of the Title. I think Poetic Vigils, as short and sweet as can be desired, only have an eye on the Proof, that the Printer do not substitute Virgils, which would ill accord with modesty or meaning. Your suggested motto is antique enough in spelling, and modern enough in phrases; a good modern antique: but the matter of it is germane to the purpose only supposing the title proposed a vindication of yourself from the presumption of authorship. The 1st title was liable to this objection, that if you were disposed to enlarge it, and the bookseller insisted on its appearance in Two Tomes, how oddly it would sound—

A Volume of Verse
in Two Volumes
2d edition &c—

You see thro' my wicked intention of curtailing this Epistolet by the above device of large margin. But in truth the idea of letterising has been oppressive to me of late above your candour to give me credit for. There is Southey, whom I ought to have thank'd a fortnight ago for a present of the Church Book. I have never had courage to buckle myself in earnest even to acknowledge it by six words. And yet I am accounted by some people a good man. How cheap that character is acquired! Pay your debts, don't borrow money, nor twist your kittens neck off, or disturb a congregation, &c.—your business is done. I know things

(thoughts or things—thoughts are things) of myself which would make every friend I have fly me as a plague patient. I once * * *, and set a dog upon a crab's leg that was shoved out under a moss of sea weeds, a pretty little feeler.—Oh! pah! how sick I am of that; and a lie, a mean one, I once told!—

I stink in the midst of respect.

I am much hypt; the fact is, my head is heavy, but there is hope, or if not, I am better than a poor shell fish—not morally when I set the whelp upon it, but have more blood and spirits; things may turn up, and I may creep again into a decent opinion of myself. Vanity will return with sunshine. Till when, pardon my neglects and impute it to the wintry solstice.

C. LAMB.

[The motto eventually adopted for Barton's *Poetic Vigils* was from Vaughan's *Silex Scintillans*:

Dear night! this world's defeat;
The stop to busie fools; care's check and curb;
The day of spirits; my soul's calm retreat
Which none disturb!

Pope's exact words are:

Sleepless themselves, to give their readers sleep.

Dunciad, i. 94.

On 5th March 1824 Crabb Robinson walked to Colebrook Cottage, where he found Monkhouse and Manning and, after whist, discussed theology. Lamb, he remarks, although impatient with dogma, 'has the organ of theosophy and is by nature pious.']

507. TO BERNARD BARTON

[(*Early spring*), *1824*.]

I am sure I cannot fill a letter, though I should disfurnish my scull to fill it. But you expect something, and shall have a Note-let. Is Sunday, not divinely speaking, but humanly and holydaysically, a blessing? Without its institution, would our rugged taskmasters have given us a leisure day, so often, think you, as once in a month?—or, if it had not been instituted, might they not have given us every 6th day? Solve me this problem. If we are to go 3 times a day to church, why has Sunday slipped into the notion of a *Holli*day? A Holyday I grant it. The puritans, I have read in Southey's Book, knew the distinction.

They made people observe Sunday rigorously, would not let a nursery maid walk out in the fields with children for recreation on that day. But *then*—they gave the people a holliday from all sorts of work every second Tuesday. This was giving to the Two Cæsars that which was *his* respective. Wise, beautiful, thoughtful, generous Legislators! Would Wilberforce give us our Tuesdays? No, d—n him. He would turn the six days into sevenths,

> And those 3 smiling seasons of the year
> Into a Russian winter.
>
> *Old Play.*

I am sitting opposite a person who is making strange distortions with the gout, which is not unpleasant—to me at least. What is the reason we do not sympathise with pain, short of some terrible Surgical operation? Hazlitt, who boldly says all he feels, avows that not only he does not pity sick people, but he hates them. I obscurely recognise his meaning. Pain is probably too selfish a consideration, too simply a consideration of self-attention. We pity poverty, loss of friends etc. more complex things, in which the Sufferers feelings are associated with others. This is a rough thought suggested by the presence of gout; I want head to extricate it and plane it. What is all this to your Letter? I felt it to be a good one, but my turn, when I write at all, is perversely to travel out of the record, so that my letters are any thing but answers. So you still want a motto? You must not take my ironical one, because your book, I take it, is too serious for it. Bickerstaff might have used it for *his* lucubrations. What do you think of (for a Title)

RELIGIO TREMULI
OR TREMEBUNDI

There is Religio-Medici and Laici.—But perhaps the volume is not quite Quakerish enough or exclusively for it—but your own VIGILS is perhaps the Best. While I have space, let me congratulate with you the return of Spring, what a Summery Spring too! all those qualms about the dog and cray-fish melt before it. I am going to be happy and *vain* again.

A hasty farewell C. LAMB.

['Southey's Book.' *The Book of the Church.*
'Would Wilberforce give us our Tuesdays?' William Wilberforce, the abolitionist and the principal 'Puritan' of that day.
Old Play. The lines are from Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, which Lamb had quoted from a little while before.]

508. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *24th March 1824.*]

DEAR B. B.,

I hasten to say that if my opinion can strengthen you in your choice, it is decisive for your acceptance of what has been so handsomely offered. I can see nothing injurious to your most honourable sense. Think that you are called to a poetical Ministry—nothing worse—the Minister is worthy of the hire.—

The only objection I feel is founded on a fear that the acceptance may be a temptation to you to let fall the bone (hard as it is) which is in your mouth and must afford tolerable pickings, for the shadow of independence. You cannot propose to become independent on what the low state of interest could afford you from such a principal as you mention; and the most graceful excuse for the acceptance, would be, that it left you free to your voluntary functions. That is the less *light* part of the scruple. It has no darker shade. I put in *darker*, because of the ambiguity of the word light, which Donne in his admirable poem on the Metempsychosis, has so ingeniously illustrated in his invocation,

1 2 1 2
Make my *dark heavy* poem, *light* and *light*—

where the two senses of *light* are opposed to different opposites. A trifling criticism.—I can see no reason for any scruple then but what arises from your own interest; which is in your own power of course to solve. If you still have doubts, read over Sanderson's Cases of Conscience, and Jeremy Taylor's Ductor Dubitantium, the first a moderate Octavo, the latter a folio of 900 close pages, and when you have thoroughly digested the admirable reasons pro and con which they give for every possible Case, you will be ——just as wise as when you began. Every man is his own best

Casuist; and after all, as Ephraim Smooth, in the pleasant comedy of Wild Oats, has it, 'there is no harm in a Guinea.' A fortiori there is less in 2000.

I therefore most sincerely congratulate with you, excepting so far as excepted above. If you have fair Prospects of adding to the Principal, cut the Bank; but in either case do not refuse an honest Service. Your heart tells you it is not offered to bribe you *from* any duty, but *to* a duty which you feel to be your vocation. Farewell heartily C. L.

[In the memoir of Barton by Edward FitzGerald, prefixed to the *Poems and Letters*, it is stated that in this year Barton received a handsome addition to his income. 'A few members of his Society, including some of the wealthier of his own family, raised £1200 among them for his benefit [not 2000 guineas, as Lamb says]. It seems that he felt some delicacy at first in accepting this munificent testimony which his own people offered to his talents.' Barton had written to Lamb on the subject.]

509. TO MRS. THOMAS ALLSOP

DEAR MRS. A. [P.M. *13th April 1824.*]

Mary begs me to say how much she regrets we can not join you to Reigate. Our reasons are —1st I have but one holyday namely Good Friday, and it is not pleasant to solicit for another, but that might have been got over. 2dly Manning is with us, soon to go away and we should not be easy in leaving him. 3dly Our school girl Emma comes to us for a few days on Thursday. 4thly and lastly, Wordsworth is returning home in about a week, and out of respect to them we should not like to absent ourselves just now. In summer I shall have a month, and if it shall suit, should like to go for a few days of it out with you both *any where*, In the mean time, with many acknowledgments etc. etc., I remain yours (both) truly,

C. LAMB.

India Ho. 13 Apr.
Remember Sundays.

[Emma Isola here makes a reappearance after a long silence respecting her. 'Manning is with us.' I fancy that this visit is the one which Manning describes in his letter to Lamb on page 455.]

510. TO WILLIAM HONE

[No date: *? April 1824.*]

DEAR SIR,

Miss Hazlitt is anxious about her MS. novel. Would you be so kind as to transmit it some way or other to Mr Hardy, 30, Queen's Row, or Queen's Square, Pimlico, if he has not already got it? I am afraid I have not duly acknowledged the present of your excellent pamphlet, for which much thanks and approbation, tho' late.

I remain, yours truly,

C. LAMB.

Mr Hone,
45, Ludgate Hill.

[Hone's pamphlet would be his *Aspersions Answered: an Explanatory Statement to the Public at Large and Every Reader of the 'Quarterly Review,'* 1824. See next Letter.]

511. TO WILLIAM HONE

[No date: *April 1824.*]

DEAR SIR,

Miss Hazlitt (niece to Pygmalion) begs us to send to you *for Mr. Hardy* a parcel. I have not thank'd you for your Pamphlet, but I assure you I approve of it in all parts, only that I would have seen my Calumniators at hell, before I would have told them I was a Xtian, *tho' I am one*, I think as much as you. I hope to see you here, some day soon. The parcel is a novel which I hope Mr. H. may sell for her. I am with greatest friendliness

Yours C. LAMB.

Sunday.

['Pygmalion.' A reference to Hazlitt's *Liber Amoris; or, The New Pygmalion*, 1823.

On 3rd May 1824, at St. Dunstan's-in-the-West, George Dyer (aged 69) married Honour Mather (widow).]

512. TO THOMAS HARDY

[Dated at end: *24th April 1824.*]

DEAR SIR,

Miss Hazlitt has begged me to say to you that the novel which you kindly promised to introduce to Mr. Ridgway, is lying for

that purpose at Mr. Hone's, Ludgate Street, where you will perhaps be so kind as to send for it. She is going on 10th May as Governess into the family of Mrs. Brookes, Dawlish, where she shall be thankful to receive any communications respecting the novel. She is now at 14 Queen's Square, Bristol.

I am, Sir,
With great respect
Yours &c.

India House. CH. LAMB.
24 April 1824.

[The only letter to this correspondent, Thomas Hardy (1752–1832), radical politician, who in 1794 was arraigned for High Treason, with two of Lamb's friends, Holcroft and Thelwall, among the other offenders, but was acquitted.]

513. TO MISS JANE REYNOLDS

[No date: *early 1824.*]

C. Lamb's Compts to Miss Reynolds. Mr. Hood has got Trusler's explanation of Hogarth with the plates in small. He sends her his own little Essay on Hogarth. Trusler is an old-looking brown cover'd octavo, which he dares say is lying about Mr. Hood's parlour.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'Hood became engaged to Jane Reynolds, sister of John Hamilton Reynolds, in the autumn of 1822, but Lamb was not Hood's neighbour till August 1823, when he moved to Colebrook. Hood lived with his sisters at 5 Lower Street, Islington; the Reynolds family lived in Little Britain. He and Jane Reynolds were married 5th May 1825.'
Hogarth Moralized, by the Rev. John Trusler, was published in 1768.]

514. TO BERNARD BARTON

DEAR B. B., *May 15, 1824.*

I am oppressed with business all day, and Company all night. But I will snatch a quarter of an hour. Your recent acquisitions of the Picture and the Letter are greatly to be congratulated. I too have a picture of my father and the copy of his first love verses; but they have been mine long. Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he be still living. He is

the Robert [William] Blake, whose wild designs accompany a splendid folio edition of the 'Night Thoughts,' which you may have seen, in one of which he pictures the parting of soul and body by a solid mass of human form floating off, God knows how, from a lumpish mass (fac Simile to itself) left behind on the dying bed. He paints in water colours marvellous strange pictures, visions of his brain, which he asserts that he has seen. They have great merit. He has *seen* the old Welsh bards on Snowdon—he has seen the Beautifullest, the strongest, and the Ugliest Man, left alone from the Massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory (I have seen his paintings), and asserts them to be as good as the figures of Raphael and Angelo, but not better, as they had precisely the same retro-visions and prophetic visions with themself [himself]. The painters in oil (which he will have it that neither of them practised) he affirms to have been the ruin of art, and affirms that all the while he was engaged in his Water paintings, Titian was disturbing him, Titian the Ill Genius of Oil Painting. His Pictures—one in particular, the Canterbury Pilgrims (far above Stothard's)—have great merit, but hard, dry, yet with grace. He has written a Catalogue of them with a most spirited criticism on Chaucer, but mystical and full of Vision. His poems have been sold hitherto only in Manuscript. I never read them; but a friend at my desire procured the 'Sweep Song.' There is one to a tiger, which I have heard recited, beginning:

> Tiger, Tiger, burning bright,
> Thro' the desarts of the night,

which is glorious, but, alas! I have not the book; for the man is flown, whither I know not—to Hades or a Mad House. But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age. Montgomery's book I have not much hope from. The Society, with the affected name, has been labouring at it for these 20 years, and made few converts. I think it was injudicious to mix stories avowedly colour'd by fiction with the sad true statements from the parliamentary records, etc., but I wish the little Negroes all the good that can come from it. I batter'd my brains (not butter'd them—but it is a bad *a*) for a few verses for them, but I could make nothing of it. You have been luckier.

But Blake's are the flower of the set, you will, I am sure, agree, tho' some of Montgomery's at the end are pretty; but the Dream awkwardly paraphras'd from B.

With the exception of an Epilogue for a Private Theatrical, I have written nothing now for near 6 months. It is in vain to spur me on. I must wait. I cannot write without a genial impulse, and I have none. 'Tis barren all and dearth. No matter; life is something without scribbling. I have got rid of my bad spirits, and hold up pretty well this rain-damn'd May.

So we have lost another Poet. I never much relished his Lordship's mind, and shall be sorry if the Greeks have cause to miss him. He was to me offensive, and I never can make out his great *power*, which his admirers talk of. Why, a line of Wordsworth's is a lever to lift the immortal spirit! Byron can only move the Spleen. He was at best a Satyrist,—in any other way he was mean enough. I dare say I do him injustice; but I cannot love him, nor squeeze a tear to his memory. He did not like the world, and he has left it, as Alderman Curtis advised the Radicals, 'If they don't like their country, damn 'em, let 'em leave it,' they possessing no rood of ground in England, and he 10,000 acres. Byron was better than many Curtises.

Farewell, and accept this apology for a letter from one who owes you so much in that kind.

Yours ever truly, C. L.

[Lamb's portrait of his father is reproduced in vol. ii of my edition of the *Works*. The first love verses are no more.

William Blake was at this time sixty-six years of age. He was living in poverty and neglect at 3 Fountain Court, Strand. Blake made 537 illustrations to Young's *Night Thoughts*, of which only forty-seven were published. Lamb is, however, thinking of his edition of Blair's *Grave*. The exhibition of his works was held in 1809, and it was for this that Blake wrote the descriptive catalogue. Lamb had sent 'The Chimney Sweeper,' in the *Songs of Innocence*, to James Montgomery for his *Chimney-Sweepers' Friend and Climbing Boys' Album*, 1824, a little book designed to ameliorate the lot of those children, in whose interest a society existed. Barton also contributed something. It was Blake's poem which had excited Barton's curiosity. Probably he thought that Lamb wrote it. Lamb's mistake concerning Blake's name is curious in so far as that it was Blake's brother Robert who in a vision revealed to the poet the method by which the *Songs of Innocence* were to be reproduced. He died in 1787. It might be added that Lamb's enthusiasm for Blake seems to have converted

Barton, who, in 1830, was corresponding with John Linnell, the painter, about him.

'The Dream awkwardly paraphras'd from B.' The book ended with three Climbing-Boys' Soliloquies by Montgomery. The second was a dream in which the dream in Blake's song was extended and prosified.

'The Society with the affected name.' The Society for Ameliorating the Condition of Infant Chimney-Sweepers.

'An Epilogue for a Private Theatrical.' Probably the epilogue for the amateur performance of *Richard II*, given by the family of Henry Field, Barron Field's father (see vol. iv of my edition of the *Works*).

'Another Poet.' Byron died on 19th April 1824.

'Alderman Curtis.' See note to the letter to Morgan, 8th March 1811.]

515. TO BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

May 1824.

DEAR P.,

I have been sadly negligent (but I call'd once in Frans. St.) in not acknowledging your little Book, which I pronounce capital in its way, & just enough of it. The moderner criticisms I think are happiest. But where did you fall flat on the error that Sheffield Duke of B. wrote the Rehearsal? He was a blockhead, it was Villiers—. I am going to a Tavern dinner. Pray for me. Tell me where you are, & how we may meet.

Yours Truly

C. L.

['Frans. St.' Probably Francis Street, Tottenham Court Road.

Procter's new book was *Effigies Poeticæ*.

On 1st June 1824 Crabb Robinson dined with Lamb, and then walked with him to Newington to call on Mrs. Barbauld. Lamb, however, was disputatious. 'He reasons from feelings.']

516. TO J. A. HESSEY

June 9 1824.

DEAR SIR,

I acknowledge with thanks the receipt of £35 for Elias (alas) of last year, and when I can, I will resume. Believe me that nothing but incapacity prevents me. Something may occur to set me off again

Yours ever

C. LAMB.

I shall call in a few days to see Clare & settle his coming to dine with us again

Yours

[*Signature cut out.*]

Pray don't send me 2 Magazines Every Month but 1 is needful—I hardly deserve that.

[On 10th June 1824 Crabb Robinson dined at Lamb's and walked with him to Highgate. Henry Taylor was there and talked so much about the East that when he rose to go Lamb asked: 'Are you looking for your turban, sir?'

Mary and Vincent Novello, writing to Leigh Hunt on 23rd June 1824, wrote of the Lambs: 'They were both very amusing. Describing their having been to dine at Sir George Beaumont's in Grosvenor Square, Mr. Lamb assured us that all Islington knew of the event, himself took every occasion of mentioning his friends, Sir George and Lady Beaumont, etc. Munden sent Charles Lamb two tickets for his farewell performance, and he and his sister sat in the orchestra boxes with a gay party. During the evening Munden suddenly appeared at the wings with a pot of porter, and handed it to Lamb, who in the face of lords and ladies absorbed it, and therefore boasts that having this porter presented him by Munden was one of "the good things of his life."']

517. TO J. A. HESSEY

[P.M. *26th June 1824.*]

DEAR SIR,

I feel greatly obliged by your attention and shall certainly avail myself of the Hogarths &c.—

I should apologise to you for my seeming neglect of your former kind invitation to your parties. The fact is, I am foolish shy of new faces. But I shall take an opportunity some day of looking in upon you in the character of an old acquaintᵒᵉ.

meantime

I remain

Your obliged

C LAMB

518. TO FANNY KELLY

[Dated at end: *26th June 1824.*]

C. and M. Lamb have just come from Ware, where they have been confined in a dull Inn for 3 days by wet weather. They

will be most happy to see Miss K. and her friends any evening they will name, but should like to know in time, it being C. L.'s holyday, and they purposing to go out here and there for a night or two during the next 3 weeks. Inclosed, or inclosing, is a receit for Mrs. Arnold, whom they hope to see too with Mr. A. or at least the latter. They are sure to be at home before Wednesday.

Saturday, Islington,
June 26th, 1824.

[On 5th July 1824 Crabb Robinson took tea at Lamb's and found Edward Irving and Thomas Carlyle there. Although there was evidently a lack of sympathy, he describes it as 'an agreeable evening enough.' Carlyle, who a few years later, after another visit, was to set on paper so narrow-minded and inimical an impression of Lamb, was then twenty-eight, Irving nearly thirty-two and, as a preacher in the Hatton Garden Chapel, at the height of his fame.

On the next day Robinson was again at Lamb's, Hessey being also there. The conversation turning on De Quincey's bodily sufferings, Lamb said he should be published by Pain and Fuss.]

519. TO BERNARD BARTON

July 7th, 1824.

DEAR B. B.,

I have been suffering under a severe inflammation of the eyes, notwithstanding which I resolutely went through your very pretty volume at once, which I dare pronounce in no ways inferior to former lucubrations. '*Abroad*' and '*lord*' are vile rhymes notwithstanding, and if you count you will wonder how many times you have repeated the word *unearthly*—thrice in one poem. It is become a slang word with the bards; avoid it in future lustily. 'Time' is fine; but there are better a good deal, I think. The volume does not lie by me; and, after a long day's smarting fatigue, which has almost put out my eyes (not blind however to your merits), I dare not trust myself with long writing. The verses to Bloomfield are the sweetest in the collection. Religion is sometimes lugged in, as if it did not come naturally. I will go over carefully when I get my seeing, and exemplify. You have also too much of singing metre, such as requires no deep ear to make; lilting measure, in which you have done Woolman

injustice. Strike at less superficial melodies. The piece on Nayler is more to my fancy.

My eye runs waters. But I will give you a fuller account some day. The book is a very pretty one in more than one sense. The decorative harp, perhaps, too ostentatious; a simple pipe preferable.

Farewell, and many thanks. C. LAMB.

[Barton's new book was *Poetic Vigils*, 1824. It contained among other poems *An Ode to Time*, *Verses to the Memory of Bloomfield*, *A Memorial of John Woolman*, beginning:

There is glory to me in thy Name,
Meek follower of Bethlehem's Child,
More touching by far than the splendour of Fame
With which the vain world is beguil'd,

and *A Memorial of James Nayler*. Also the *Sonnet to Elia* which we have seen.]

520. TO JOHN HOWARD PAYNE

[No date: probably *12th July 1824*.]

DEAR J. H. P.,

Thank you. I shall certainly attend your farce if in town; but as 'tis possible I shall ruralize this week, I will have no orders of you till next week. All Sundays I am ready to ambulate with you, but will make no engagement for this week,—to leave the poor residue of my holidays unembarrassed.

Yours truly,

C. L.

521. CHARLES AND MARY LAMB TO SAMUEL JAMES ARNOLD

[No date: *? July 1824*.]

DEAR SIR,

We beg to convey our kindest acknowledgements to Mr. Arnold for the very pleasant privilege he has favoured us with. My yearly holidays end with next week, during which we shall be mostly in the country, and afterwards avail ourselves fully of the privilege. Sincerely wishing you crowded houses, etc.,

We remain,

Yours truly,

CH. & M. LAMB.

[Arnold, brother-in-law of Ayrton, was the lessee of the Lyceum.]

522. CHARLES LAMB TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

[No date: probably *July 1824*.]

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

Mr. Ainsworth of Manchester, whom I believe to be a very estimable man, and know to be an Enthusiast in Poetry, etc. desires to be introduced to you. Have I credit enough with you to effect it? I am almost shy of doing it, because I want to introduce to you in a few weeks my friend Barron Field from Sydney, who has desired such letters, being on his travels northward. You must be often troubled with intruders, but I think I have not added many to the number.

My poor holydays are over. We have sneak'd about to Ware, Kingston, etc.—sleeping out a night or two at a time, but have ventured on no more daring excursion—

I hope your Eyes are tolerable. I have suffer'd sadly from one lately. How do you manage about *reading* in that case? There are books, which are as good to read out, or hear read, as to read by oneself; but the lighter offal, Mags., Newspapers etc. it is indispensable to glance over per se. I cannot be the auditor of a paragraph.

No news stirring. Coleridge is seen daily trudging on Highgate Hill, and blooming. Mary is in capital health, and I have a hope at bottom, that it be better for her, that we did not go out of town this summer. I have a conceit, that she has one, that she may escape illness by this moderation. Her thinking so (tho' we say nothing about it) may go a great way.

Do you know Watery Ware? It is redolent in springs & clear books, two or three rivers meet there. It is quite far enough for a Gentleman to purge off town air, a snug and safe distance, and shall be my future tether. The Trouts in particular are admirable.

The Dyers were with us on Sunday. Mrs. D. amus'd a Lady at our house with an account of her family economy. It seems G. D. shifts every other day, besides night shirts, etc.—He on tother hand, commends her as the most *cleanly creature*; as you would commend a cat. Matrimony I take it is a great cleanser. Everybody says how clean he is now. That is all the idea Frend

seems to have of his old college crony. Beasts! not to have discerned G. D. but by the courtesy of a Little Soap.

My head akes with a dull opera last night. I do not know a flatness comparable to coming home after a Play that has not amused—nor a pleasanter thing, than to talk over a contrary one at Supper.

N.B. This is no letter, only a letter of recommendation.

God bless you. Love to all

C. LAMB

[Ainsworth (see Letter 501) had evidently postponed his visit to Wordsworth from January to July. A letter of introduction for Barron Field will be found on page 438.]

523. TO W. MARTER

[Dated at end: *19th July* (*1824*).]

DEAR MARTER,

I have just rec[d] your letter, having returned from a month's holydays. My exertions for the London are, tho' not dead, in a dead sleep for the present. If your club like scandal, Blackwood's is your magazine; if you prefer light articles, and humorous without offence, the New Monthly is very amusing. The best of it is by Horace Smith, the author of the Rejected Addresses. The Old Monthly has more of matter, information, but not so merry. I cannot safely recommend any others, as not knowing them, or knowing them to their disadvantage. Of Reviews, beside what you mention, I know of none except the Review on Hounslow Heath, which I take it is too expensive for your ordering. Pity me, that have been a Gentleman these four weeks, and am reduced in one day to the state of a ready writer. I feel, I feel, my gentlemanly qualities fast oozing away—such as a sense of honour, neckcloths twice a day, abstinence from swearing, &c. The desk enters into my soul.

See my thoughts on business next Page.

SONNET

Who first invented *work?*—and bound the free
And holyday-rejoicing Spirit down
To the ever-haunting importunity
Of *Business* in the green fields, and the Town—

To plough, loom, [anvil,] spade, and (oh most sad!)
To this dry drudgery of the desk's dead wood?
Who but the Being unblest, alien from good,
Sabbathless Satan! He, who his unglad
Task ever plies 'mid rotatory burnings,
That round and round incalculably reel—
For wrath divine hath made him like a wheel—
In that red realm from whence are no returnings;
Where toiling & turmoiling ever & aye
He and his Thoughts keep pensive worky-day.

With many recollections of pleasanter times, my old compeer, happily released before me, Adieu. C. LAMB.

E. I. H.
19 July.

[Marter was an old India House clerk; we do not meet with him again. The sonnet had been printed in the *Examiner* in 1819. Lamb, who was fond of it, reprinted it in *Album Verses*, 1830.]

524. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

[Dated at end: *28th July 1824.*]

MY DEAR SIR,

I must appear negligent in not having thanked you for the very pleasant books you sent me. Arthur, and the Novel, we have both of us read with unmixed satisfaction. They are full of quaint conceits, and running over with good humour and good nature. I naturally take little interest in story, but in these the manner and not the end is the interest; it is such pleasant travelling, one scarce cares whither it leads us. Pray express our pleasure to your father with my best thanks.

I am involved in a routine of visiting among the family of Barron Field, just ret[d]. from Botany Bay—I shall hardly have an open Evening before TUESDAY next. Will you come to us then?

Yours truly, C. LAMB.

Wensday 28 July 24.

[*Arthur* and the novel were two books by Charles Dibdin the Younger, the father of Lamb's correspondent. Arthur was *Young Arthur; or, The Child of Mystery: A Metrical Romance*, 1819, and the novel was *Isn't It Odd?* three volumes of high-spirited ramblings something in the manner of *Tristram Shandy*, nominally written by Marmaduke Merrywhistle, and published in 1822.

Barron Field had returned from his judgeship in New South Wales on 18th June.]

525. TO THOMAS HOOD

[P.M. *10th August 1824.*]

And what dost thou at the Priory? *Cucullus non facit Monachum.* English me that, and challenge old Lignum Janua to make a better.

My old New River has presented no extraordinary novelties lately; but there Hope sits every day, speculating upon traditionary gudgeons. I think she has taken the fisheries. I now know the reason why our forefathers were denominated East and West Angles. Yet is there no lack of spawn; for I wash my hands in fishets that come through the pump every morning thick as motelings,—little things o o o like *that*, that perish untimely, and never taste the brook. You do not tell me of those romantic land bays that be as thou goest to Lover's Seat: neither of that little churchling in the midst of a wood (in the opposite direction, nine furlongs from the town), that seems dropped by the Angel that was tired of carrying two packages; marry, with the other he made shift to pick his flight to Loretto. Inquire out, and see my little Protestant Loretto. It stands apart from trace of human habitation; yet hath it pulpit, reading-desk, and trim font of massiest marble, as if Robinson Crusoe had reared it to soothe himself with old church-going images. I forget its Christian name, and what she-saint was its gossip.

You should also go to No. 13, Standgate Street,—a baker, who has the finest collection of marine monsters in ten sea counties,—sea dragons, polypi, mer-people, most fantastic. You have only to name the old gentleman in black (not the Devil) that lodged with him a week (he'll remember) last July, and he will show courtesy. He is by far the foremost of the savans. His wife is the funniest thwarting little animal! They are decidedly the Lions of green Hastings. Well, I have made an end of my say. My epistolary time is gone by when I could have scribbled as long (I will not say as agreeable) as thine was to both of us. I am dwindled to notes and letterets. But, in good earnest, I shall be most happy to hail thy return to the waters of Old Sir Hugh. There is nothing like inland murmurs, fresh ripples, and our native minnows.

> He sang in meads how sweet the brooklets ran,
> To the rough ocean and red restless sands.

I design to give up smoking; but I have not yet fixed upon the equivalent vice. I must have *quid pro quo*; or *quo pro quid*, as Tom Woodgate would correct me. My service to him.

C. L.

[The Hoods were staying at Hastings, and, like the Lambs, near the Priory.

'*Cucullus non facit Monachum.*' A 'Lamb-pun.' The Hood does not make the monk.

'Old Lignum Janua.' The Tom Woodgate mentioned at the end of the letter, a boatman at Hastings. Hood wrote some verses to him.

'My old New River.' This passage was placed by Hood as the motto of his verses *Walton Redivivus*, in *Whims and Oddities*, 1826.

'Little churchling.' This is Lamb's second description of Hollington Rural. The third and best is in Letter 623.

'Sir Hugh.' Myddleton, the father of the New River Company. Hood also lived at Islington at that time.

'There is nothing like inland murmurs.' Lamb is here remembering Wordsworth's Tintern Abbey lines:

With a soft inland murmur.

'He sang.'

In smiling meads how sweet the brook's repose,
To the rough ocean and red restless sands!

Landor, *Gebir*, Book iv.

In the *Elia* essay 'The Old Margate Hoy' Lamb, in speaking of Hastings, had made the same objection.

In a letter to his sister, written from Hastings at this time, Hood says:

This is the last of our excursions. We have tried, but in vain, to find out the baker and his wife recommended to us by Lamb as the very lions of green Hastings. There is no such street as he has named throughout the town, and the ovens are singularly numerous. We have given up the search, therefore, but we have discovered the little church in the wood, and it is such a church! It ought to have been our St. Botolph's. . . . Such a verdant covert wood Stothard might paint for the haunting of Dioneus, Pamphillus, and Fiammetta as they walk in the novel of Boccacce. The ground shadowed with bluebells, even to the formation of a plumb-like bloom upon its little knolls and ridges; and ever through the dell windeth a little path chequered with the shades of aspens and ashes and the most verdant and lively of all the family of trees. Here a broad, rude stone steppeth over a lazy spring, oozing its way into grass and weeds; anon a fresh pathway divergeth, you know not whither. Meanwhile the wild blackbird startles across the way and singeth anew in some other shade. To have seen Fiammetta there, stepping in silk attire, like a flower, and the sunlight looking upon her betwixt the branches! I had not walked (in the body) with Romance before. Then suppose so much of a space cleared as maketh a small church *lawn* to be sprinkled with old gravestones, and in the midst the church itself, a small

Christian dovecot, such as Lamb has truly described it, like a little temple of Juan Fernandes. I could have been sentimental and wished to lie some day in that place, its calm tenants seeming to come through such quiet ways, through those verdant alleys, to their graves.

In coming home I killed a viper in our serpentine path, and Mrs. Fernor says I am by that token to overcome an enemy. Is Taylor or Hessey dead? The reptile was dark and full, his blood being yet sluggish from the cold; howbeit, he tried to bite, till I cut him in two with a stone. I thought of Hessey's long back-bone when I did it.

They are called *adders*, tell your father, because two and two of them together make four.]

526. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *17th August 1824.*]

DEAR B. B.,

I congratulate you on getting a house over your head. I find the comfort of it I am sure. At my town lodgings the Mistress was always quarrelling with our maid; and at my place of rustication, the whole family were always beating one another, brothers beating sisters (one a most beautiful girl lamed for life), father beating sons and daughters, and son again beating his father, knocking him fairly down, a scene I never before witnessed, but was called out of bed by the unnatural blows, the parricidal colour of which, tho' my morals could not but condemn, yet my reason did heartily approve, and in the issue the house was quieter for a day or so than I had ever known. I am now all harmony and quiet, even to the sometimes wishing back again some of the old rufflings. There is something stirring in these civil broils.

The Album shall be attended to. If I can light upon a few appropriate rhymes (but rhymes come with difficulty from me now) I shall beg a place in the neat margin of your young housekeeper.

The Prometheus Unbound is a capital story. The Literal rogue! What if you had ordered Elfrida in *sheets*! She 'd have been sent up, I warrant you. Or bid him clasp his bible (*i.e.* to his bosom)—he 'd ha clapt on a brass clasp, no doubt.—

I can no more understand Shelley than you can. His poetry is

'thin sewn with profit or delight.' Yet I must point to your notice a sonnet conceivd and expressed with a witty delicacy. It is that addressed to one who hated him, but who could not persuade him to hate *him* again. His coyness to the other's passion (for hate demands a return as much as Love, and starves without it) is most arch and pleasant. Pray, like it very much.

For his theories and nostrums they are oracular enough, but I either comprehend 'em not, or there is miching malice and mischief in 'em. But for the most part ringing with their own emptiness. Hazlitt said well of 'em—Many are wiser and better for reading Shakspeare, but nobody was ever wiser or better for reading Sh—y.

I wonder you will sow your correspondence on so barren a ground as I am, that make such poor returns. But my head akes at the bare thought of letter writing. I wish all the ink in the ocean dried up, and would listen to the quills shivering [? shrivelling] up in the candle flame, like parching martyrs. The same indisposit^{n} to write it is has stopt my Elias, but you will see a futile Effort in the next No., 'wrung from me with slow pain.'

The fact is, my head is seldom cool enough. I am dreadfully indolent. To have to do anything, to order me a new coat, for instance, tho' my old buttons are shelled like beans, is an effort.

My pen stammers like my tongue. What cool craniums those old enditers of Folios must have had. What a mortify'd pulse. Well, once more I throw myself on your mercy—Wishing peace in thy new dwelling— C. LAMB.

[The Lambs gave up their 'country lodgings' at Dalston on moving to Colebrook Row.

'The Album.' See next letter to Barton.

'The Prometheus Unbound.' A bookseller, asked for *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley's poem, had replied that *Prometheus* was not to be had 'in sheets': a joke worked up by Theodore Hook into a rhymed epigram. *Elfrida* was a dramatic poem by William Mason, Gray's friend.

This is Shelley's poem (not a sonnet) which Lamb liked:

LINES TO A REVIEWER

Alas! good friend, what profit can you see
In hating such an hateless thing as me?
There is no sport in hate, where all the rage
Is on one side. In vain would you assuage

Your frowns upon an unresisting smile,
In which not even contempt lurks, to beguile
Your heart by some faint sympathy of hate.
Oh, conquer what you cannot satiate!
For to your passion I am far more coy
Then ever yet was coldest maid or boy
In winter-noon. Of your antipathy
If I am the Narcissus, you are free
To pine into a sound with hating me.

Hazlitt writes of Shelley in his essay 'On Paradox and Commonplace' in *Table Talk*; but he does not make this remark there, but in the essay 'On People of Sense' in *The Plain Speaker*.

'Thin sewn . . .' From Milton, *Paradise Regained*, iv. 345.

'The next Number.' The 'futile Effort' was 'Blakesmoor in H——shire' in the *London Magazine* for September 1824.

'Wrung from me . . .' Misquoting Polonius's words (*Hamlet*, I. ii. 58–9):

He hath, my lord, wrung from me my slow leave
By laboursome petition.]

527. TO THE REV. HENRY FRANCIS CARY

East-India House, *August 19, 1824.*

DEAR SIR,

I shall have much pleasure in dining with you on Wednesday next, with much shame that I have not noticed your kind present of the *Birds*, which I found very chirping and whimsical. I believe at the time I was daily thinking of paying you a visit, and put it off—till I should come. Somehow it slipt, and [I] must crave your pardon.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[Cary's translation of the *Birds* of Aristophanes appeared in 1824.]

528. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

2 Sep., 1824.

MY DEAR WORDSWORTH,

The Bearer of this is Mr. *Barron Field*, late Judge in Civil Causes at New Holland, and author of a little poem on the

'Kangaroo,' which he sent you, & I remember you admired. He is travelling northwards & very much wishes to see you. You have formerly met him at my rooms in the Temple. I can recommend him as a most excellent & very cordial old acquaintance.

All well at home & our kindest remembᶜᵉˢ to you all.

Yours most truly,

CHAS. LAMB.

From my desk, very busy, 2, Sep. 24.

[Barron Field wrote a Life of Wordsworth, which for some reason was never published.]

529. TO THOMAS HOLCROFT

[No date: *29th September ? 1824.*]

DEAR T.,

Mary thanks you kindly for the orders. She is laid up with a most severe cold, which will prevent her going; but Emma, and some friends of hers, mean to avail themselves of them. We shall not have occasion to trouble you this time, but are obliged to you for your offer to accompany us.

530. TO BERNARD BARTON

[Dated at end: *30th September 1824.*]

Little Book! surnam'd of White;
Clean, as yet, and fair to sight;
Keep thy attribution right.

Never disproportion'd scrawl;
Ugly blot, that's worse than all;
On thy maiden clearness fall.

In each Letter, here design'd,
Let the Reader emblem'd find
Neatness of the Owner's mind.

Gilded margins count a sin;
Let thy leaves attraction win
By the Golden Rules within:

Sayings, fetch'd from Sages old;
Saws, which Holy Writ unfold,
Worthy to be writ in Gold:

Lighter Fancies not excluding;
Blameless wit, with nothing rude in,
Sometimes mildly interluding

Amid strains of graver measure:—
Virtue's self hath oft her pleasure
In sweet Muses' groves of leisure.

Riddles dark, perplexing sense;
Darker meanings of offence;
What but *shades*, be banish'd hence.

Whitest Thoughts, in whitest dress—
Candid Meanings—best express
Mind of quiet Quakeress.

DEAR B. B.,

'I am ill at these numbers;' but if the above be not too mean to have a place in thy Daughter's Sanctum, take them with pleasure. I assume that her Name is Hannah, because it is a pretty scriptural cognomen. I began on another sheet of paper, and just as I had penn'd the second line of Stanza 2 an ugly Blot [*here is a blot*] as big as this, fell, to illustrate my counsel.—I am sadly given to blot, and modern blotting-paper gives no redress; it only smears and makes it worse, as for example [*here is a smear*]. The only remedy is scratching out, which gives it a Clerkish look. The most innocent blots are made with red ink, and are rather ornamental. [*Here are two or three blots in red ink.*] Marry, they are not always to be distinguished from the effusions of a cut finger.

Well, I hope and trust thy Tick doleru, or however you spell it, is vanished, for I have frightful impressions of that Tick, and do altogether hate it, as an unpaid score, or the Tick of a Death Watch. I take it to be a species of Vitus's dance (I omit the Sanctity, writing to 'one of the men called Friends'). I knew a young Lady who could dance no other, she danced thro' life, and very queer and fantastic were her steps. Heaven bless thee from such measures, and keep thee from the Foul Fiend, who delights

to lead after False Fires in the night, Flibbertigibit, that gives the web and the pin &c. I forget what else.—

From my den, as Bunyan has it, 30 Sep. 24. C. L.

[The verses were for the album of Barton's daughter, Lucy (not Hannah), afterwards Mrs. Edward FitzGerald. Lucy was her only name. Lamb afterwards printed them in his *Album Verses*, 1830.

Barton suggests 'agnomen' for 'cognomen.'

'Flibbertigibit.' See *King Lear*, III. iv. 120.]

531. TO J. A. HESSEY

[P.M. *8th October 1824.*]

DR. H.,

A gent in my office (a Scotsman) has an original letter of Jemmy Thomson's, but in too tatter'd & crumbling state to give the Printer. I enclose a copy of it made many years since by a Schoolboy, full of little errors easily corrected, in a Proof Sheet. The original may be seen any morning here, kept in a tin case. Is it a fit insertion for the London?

Mr. Kiddell, India Ho— is the owner of it & will show it, if you prefer seeing it.

If not useful, send me back the *copy*. I hope to have a scrap of my own before the 18th inst.

It has no date, but is previous to his *Winter*. None of the lines are in *The Seasons*.

C. LAMB.

532. TO J. A. HESSEY

[No date: a few days later.]

DEAR H.,

The letter itself would puzzle the devil it is so fragmentitious & blurrd, but it is tolerably copied, as I compared all of it I could. The original I cannot have again before Saturday, but if you can wait return this by post—but I think it is quite authentic enough not being a Charter or Grant of Land.

If you don't return this by *tomorrow morning*, I shall not trouble my friend to procure the original on Satv. If you do, I can bring it to you.

C. L.

THURSDAY.

[The Thomson letter was printed in the *London Magazine* for November 1824, and is in vol. i of my edition of Lamb's *Works*.

John Kiddell was clerk to the Private Trade Warehouse-keeper, India House.

Finally I have this fragment, also to Hessey:]

[*Late October 1824.*]

Pray send me two mags. *next month only*, one for the owner of Thompson's letter.

533. TO MRS. JOHN DYER COLLIER

[Dated at end: *2nd November 1824.*]

DEAR MRS. COLLIER,

We receive so much pig from your kindness, that I really have not phrase enough to vary successive acknowledgmts.

I think I shall get a printed form to serve on all occasions.

To say it was young, crisp, short, luscious, dainty-toed, is but to say what all its predecessors have been. It was eaten on Sunday and Monday, and doubts only exist as to which temperature it eat best, hot or cold. I incline to the latter. The Petty-feet made a pretty surprising pre-gustation for supper on Saturday night, just as I was loathingly in expectation of bren-cheese. I spell as I speak.

I do not know what news to send you. You will have heard of Alsager's death, and your Son John's success in the Lottery. I say he is a wise man, if he leaves off while he is well. The weather is wet to weariness, but Mary goes puddling about a-shopping after a gown for the winter. She wants it good & cheap. Now I hold that no good things are cheap, pig-presents always excepted. In this mournful weather I sit moping, where I now write, in an office dark as Erebus, jammed in between 4 walls, and writing by Candle-light, most melancholy. Never see the light of the Sun six hours in the day, and am surprised to find how pretty it shines on Sundays. I wish I were a Caravan driver or a Penny post man, to earn my bread in air & sunshine. Such a pedestrian as I am, to be tied by the legs, like a Fauntleroy, without the pleasure of his Exactions. I am interrupted here with an official question, which will take me up till it's time to go to

dinner, so with repeated thanks & both our kindest remembces to Mr. Collier & yourself, I conclude in haste.

Yours & his sincerely, C. LAMB.

from my den in Leadenhall, 2 Nov. 24.

On further enquiry Alsager is not dead, but Mrs. A. is bro^{t}. to bed.

[Mrs. Collier was the mother of John Payne Collier. Alsager we have already met. Henry Fauntleroy was the banker, who had just been found guilty of forgery and on the day that Lamb wrote was sentenced to death. He was executed on the 30th (see Letter 537).]

534. TO BRYAN WALLER PROCTER

[Dated at end: *11th November '24.*]

MY DEAR PROCTER,

I do agnise a shame in not having been to pay my congratulations to Mrs. Procter and your happy self, but on Sunday (my only morning) I was engaged to a country walk; and in virtue of the hypostatical union between us, when Mary calls, it is understood that I call too, we being univocal.

But indeed I am ill at these ceremonious inductions. I fancy I was not born with a call on my head, though I have brought one down upon it with a vengeance. I love not to pluck that sort of fruit crude, but to stay its ripening into visits. In probability Mary will be at Southampton Row this morning, and something of that kind be matured between you, but in any case not many hours shall elapse before I shake you by the hand.

Meantime give my kindest felicitations to Mrs. Procter, and assure her I look forward with the greatest delight to our acquaintance. By the way, the deuce a bit of Cake has come to hand, which hath an inauspicious look at first, but I comfort myself that that Mysterious Service hath the property of Sacramental Bread, which mice cannot nibble, nor time moulder.

I am married myself—to a severe step-wife, who keeps me, not at bed and board, but at desk and board, and is jealous of my morning aberrations. I can not slip out to congratulate kinder unions. It is well she leaves me alone o' nights—the damn'd Day-hag *BUSINESS*. She is even now peeping over me to see

I am writing no Love Letters. I come, my dear—Where is the Indigo Sale Book?

Twenty adieus, my dear friends, till we meet.

Yours most truly, C. LAMB.

Leadenhall, 11 Nov. '24.

[Procter married Anne Skepper, stepdaughter of Basil Montagu, in October 1824. One of their daughters was Adelaide Ann Procter.

'Agnise.' Acknowledge. It has been suggested that Lamb also favoured this old word on account of its superficial association with *agnus*.

'Born with a call.' Perhaps a note on this pun may not be superfluous. To be born with a caul was said to be lucky.]

535. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

Desk 11, *Nov. 25* [*1824.*]

MY DEAR MISS HUTCHINSON,

Mary bids me thank you for your kind letter. We are a little puzzled about your whereabouts; Miss Wordsworth writes Torkay, and you have queerly made it Torquay. Now Tokay, we have heard of, and Torbay, which we take to be the true *male* spelling of the place, but somewhere we fancy it to be on 'Devon's leafy shores,' where we heartily wish the kindly breezes may restore all that is invalid among you. Robinson is returned, and speaks much of you all. We shall be most glad to hear good news from you from time to time. The best is, Proctor is at last married. We have made sundry attempts to see the Bride, but have accidentally failed, she being gone out a gadding.

536. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[P.M. *29th November 1824.*]

DR. R.,

Barron Field bids me say that he is resident at his brother Henry's, a surgeon &c., a few doors west of Christ Church Passage Newgate Street; and that he shall be happy to accompany you up thence to Islington, when next you come our way, but not so late as you sometimes come. I think we shall be out on Tuesdy.

Yours ever

Satv. C. LAMB.

We had promised our dear friends the Monkhouses, promised ourselves rather, a visit to them at Ramsgate, but I thought it best, and Mary seemed to have it at heart too, not to go far from home these last holy days. It is connected with a sense of unsettlement, and secretly I know she hoped that such abstinence would be friendly to her health. She certainly has escaped her sad yearly visitation, whether in consequence of it, or of faith in it, and we have to be thankful for a good 1824. To get such a notion into our heads may go a great way another year. Not that we quite confined ourselves; but assuming Islington to be head quarters, we made timid flights to Ware, Watford &c. to try how the trouts tasted, for a night out or so, not long enough to make the sense of change oppressive, but sufficient to scour the rust of home.

Coleridge is not returned from the Sea. As a little scandal may divert you recluses—we were in the Summer dining at a Clergyman of Southey's 'Church of England,' at Hertford, the same who officiated to Thurtell's last moments, and indeed an old contemporary Blue of C.'s and mine at School. After dinner we talked of C., and F. who is a mighty good fellow in the main, but hath his cassock prejudices, inveighed against the moral character of C. I endeavoured to enlighten him on the subject, till having driven him out of some of his holds, he stopt my mouth at once by appealing to me whether it was not very well known that C. 'at that very moment was living in a state of open a———y with Mrs. * * * * * * at Highgate?' Nothing I could say serious or bantering after that could remove the deep inrooted conviction of the whole company assembled that such was the case! Of course you will keep this quite close, for I would not involve my poor blundering friend, who I dare say believed it all thoroughly. My interference of course was imputed to the goodness of my heart, that could imagine nothing wrong &c. Such it is if Ladies will go gadding about with other people's husbands at watering places. How careful we should be to avoid the appearance of Evil. I thought this Anecdote might amuse you. It is not worth resenting seriously; only I give it as a specimen of orthodox candour. O Southey, Southey, how long would it be before you would find one of us *Unitarians* propagating such unwarrantable Scandal! Providence keep you all from the

foul fiend Scandal, and send you back well and happy to dear Gloster Place. C. L.

['Devon's leafy shores.' Quoting Wordsworth.

Thomas Monkhouse, who was in a decline, had been ordered to Torquay.

Crabb Robinson had been in Normandy for some weeks.

The too credulous clergyman at Hertford was Frederick William Franklin, Master of the Blue Coat School there (from 1801 to 1827), who was at Christ's Hospital with Lamb.

'Mrs. ******.' Mrs. Gillman, whose name Lamb was capable of spelling with only one 'l.'

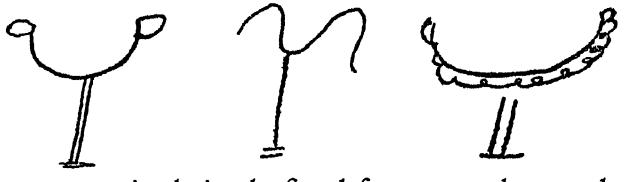
On 21st November 1824 Crabb Robinson went to Lamb's after dinner and there met Allsop. 'An amiable man.']

537. TO BERNARD BARTON AND LUCY BARTON

[P.M. *1st December 1824.*]

DEAR B. B.,

If Mr. Mitford will send me a full and circumstantial description of his desired vases, I will transmit the same to a Gentleman resident at Canton, whom I think I have interest enough in to take the proper care for their execution. But Mr. M. must have patience. China is a great way off, further perhaps than he thinks; and his next year's roses must be content to wither in a Wedgwood pot. He will please to say whether he should like his Arms upon them, &c. I send herewith some patterns which suggest themselves to me at the first blush of the subject, but he will probably consult his own taste after all.



The last pattern is obviously fitted for ranunculuses only. The two former may indifferently hold daisies, marjoram, sweet williams, and that sort. My friend in Canton is Inspector of Teas, his name Ball; and I can think of no better tunnel [? channel]. I shall expect Mr. M.'s decision.

Taylor and Hessey finding their magazine goes off very heavily at 2s. 6d. are prudently going to raise their price another shilling; and having already more authors than they want, intend to

increase the number of them. If they set up against the New Monthly, they must change their present hands. It is not tying the dead carcase of a Review to a half-dead Magazine will do their business. It is like G. D. multiplying his volumes to make 'em sell better. When he finds one will not go off, he publishes two; two stick, he tries three; three hang fire, he is confident that four will have a better chance.

And now, my dear Sir, trifling apart, the gloomy catastrophe of yesterday morning prompts a sadder vein. The fate of the unfortunate Fauntleroy makes me, whether I will or no, to cast reflecting eyes around on such of my friends as by a parity of situation are exposed to a similarity of temptation. My very style seems to myself to become more impressive than usual, with the change of theme. Who that standeth, knoweth but he may yet fall? Your hands as yet, I am most willing to believe, have never deviated into others' property. You think it impossible that you could ever commit so heinous an offence. But so thought Fauntleroy once; so have thought many besides him, who at last have expiated, as he hath done. You are as yet upright. But you are a Banker, at least the next thing to it. I feel the delicacy of the subject; but cash must pass thro' your hands, sometimes to a great amount. If in an unguarded hour——but I will hope better. Consider the scandal it will bring upon those of your persuasion. Thousands would go to see a Quaker hanged, that would be indifferent to the fate of a Presbyterian, or an Anabaptist. Think of the effect it would have on the sale of your poems alone; not to mention higher considerations. I tremble, I am sure, at myself, when I think that so many poor victims of the Law at one time of their life made as sure of never being hanged as I in my presumption am too ready to do myself. What are we better than they? Do we come into the world with different necks? Is there any distinctive mark under our left ears? Are we unstrangulable? I ask you. Think of these things. I am shocked sometimes at the shape of my own fingers, not for their resemblance to the ape tribe (which is something) but for the exquisite adaptation of them to the purposes of picking, fingering, &c. No one that is so framed, I maintain it, but should tremble.

Postscript for your Daughter's eyes only.

DEAR MISS—Your pretty little letterets make me ashamed of my great straggling coarse handwriting. I wonder where you get pens to write so small. Sure they must be the pinions of a small wren, or a robin. If you write so in your Album, you must give us glasses to read by. I have seen a Lady's similar book all writ in following fashion. I think it pretty and fanciful.

O how I love in early dawn
To bend my steps o'er flowery dawn [lawn],

which I think has an agreeable variety to the eye. Which I recommend to your notice, with friend Elia's best wishes.

[The *London Magazine* began a new series at half a crown with the number for January 1825. It had begun to decline very noticeably. The *New Monthly Magazine*, to the January number of which, 1825, Lamb contributed his 'Illustrious Defunct' essay, was its most serious rival. Lamb returned to some of his old vivacity and copiousness in the *London Magazine* for January 1825. To that number he contributed his 'Biographical Memoir of Mr. Liston' and the 'Vision of Horns'; and to the February number 'Letter to an old Gentleman,' 'Unitarian Protests,' and the 'Autobiography of Mr. Munden.'

'G. D.' George Dyer again.

Mr. Blunden thinks that Lamb's friend Ball was an Old Blue.

'Fauntleroy.' See page 443. Fauntleroy's fate seems to have had great fascination for Lamb. He returned to the subject, in the vein of this letter, in 'The Last Peach,' a little essay printed in the *London Magazine* for April 1825 (see vol. i of my edition); and in *Memories of Old Friends, being Extracts from the Journals and Letters of Caroline Fox . . . from 1835 to 1871*, 1882, I find the following entry:

> 25th October [1839].—G. Wightwick and others dined with us. He talked agreeably about capital punishments, greatly doubting their having any effect in preventing crime. Soon after Fauntleroy was hanged, an advertisement appeared, 'To all good Christians! Pray for the soul of Fauntleroy.' This created a good deal of speculation as to whether he was a Catholic, and at one of Coleridge's soirées it was discussed for a considerable time; at length Coleridge, turning to Lamb, asked, 'Do you know anything about this affair?' 'I should think I d-d-d-did,' said Elia, 'for I paid s-s-s-seven and sixpence for it!'

Lamb's postscript is written in extremely small characters, and the letters of the two lines of verse are in alternate red and black inks. It was this letter which, Edward FitzGerald tells us, Thackeray pressed to his forehead, with the remark: 'Saint Charles!' Until then, the postscript not having been thought worthy of print by previous editors, it was a little difficult to understand why this particular letter had been selected for Thackeray's epithet. But when one thinks of the patience with which, after making gentle fun of her father, Lamb sat down to amuse Lucy Barton, and, as Thackeray did, thinks also of his whole life, it becomes more clear.]

538. TO ALARIC ALEXANDER WATTS

December 28 1824.

DEAR SIR,

Thanks for your volume. If any verse is forthcoming next year, you shall have it, but I do not make two lines on an average any year now. My poor prose, which is near exhausted, is the London's, and my dry spring is not likely to overflow to a second reservoir. I saw S. T. C. on Sunday, who exprest his high satisfaction at the contents as well as exterior of the Souvenir.

You will oblige me by not *thinking* of sending me a second superior Copy. This already outshines and puts to blush my old dusty library. With much respect,

Yours,

C. LAMB.
Elia.

[Watts's *Literary Souvenirs* flourished annually from 1824 to 1838.

Mrs. Anderson's note finishes with the following quotation from a letter from Alaric A. Watts to W. Blackwood, 17th December 1821: 'Charles Lamb delivers himself with infinite pain and labour of a silly piece of trifling every month in this magazine, under the signature of Elia. . . . Charles Lamb says he can make no way in an article under at least a week.'

The four notes that follow refer to Lamb's essay 'Unitarian Protests,' which appeared in the *London Magazine* for February 1825.]

539. TO J. A. HESSEY

[P.M. Islington, *7th January 1825.*]

If you don't think this admissible, return it. I will send it to a theological magazine. C.L.

Don't make any apology for not admitting it, I doubt its proper locality. . . . Your No. 1 greatly improved.

Messrs. Taylor & Hessey
Fleet Street

Thank the Walladmore Translator for me heartily.

[The 'Walladmore Translator' was De Quincey, whose review and analysis of *Walladmor*, a spurious Waverley novel produced at Leipzig, was in the *London Magazine* for October 1824.]

540. TO J. A. HESSEY

DEAR H., [*January 1825.*]

Let the bearer have the Unitarian Letter, which I want to alter, and say in one line, will it do? *I have no choice about it—really.*

541. TO J. A. HESSEY

DEAR HESSEY, [No date: *January 1825.*]

Oblige me by conveying this parcel back to Mr. Darley, I have sent a letter with it. You shall have the Theology Saturday or Monday. Let it make my peace for this month. I will un-Unitarian myself, as you desire.

C. LAMB.

Mr. Hessey, Messrs. Taylor & Hessey, Fleet Street.

With a Tragedy in a Newspaper.

[Darley would be George Darley (1795–1846), the poet and critic, who wrote in the *London Magazine* as John Lacy.]

542. TO J. A. HESSEY

[No date: *late January 1825.*]

I think a facsimile (I have it not) a superfluous bit of trouble.

C. L.

There are two sad errors yet in the Unitarian.

543. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

MY DEAR SIR, [P.M. *11th January 1825.*]

Pray return my best thanks to your father for his little volume. It is like all of his I have seen, spirited, good humoured, and redolent of the wit and humour of a century ago. He should have lived with Gay and his set. The Chessiad is so clever that I relish'd it in spite of my total ignorance of the game. I have it not before me, but I remember a capital simile of the Char-

woman letting in her Watchman husband, which is better than Butler's Lobster turned to Red. Hazard is a grand Character, Jove in his Chair. When you are disposed to leave your one room for my six, Colebrooke is where it was, and my sister begs me to add that as she is disappointed of meeting your sister *your way*, we shall be most happy to see her *our way*, when you have an evens. to spare. Do not stand on ceremonies and introductions, but come at once. I need not say that if you can induce your father to join the party, it will be so much the pleasanter. Can you name an evening *next week?* I give you long credit.

Meantime am
as usual
yours truly

E. I. H. C. L.

11 Jan. 25.

When I saw the Chessiad advertised by C. D. the Younger, I hoped it might be yours. What title is left for you—
Charles Dibdin *the Younger, Junior.*
O No, you are Timothy.

[Charles Dibdin the Younger wrote a mock-heroic poem, *The Chessiad*, which was published with *Comic Tales* in 1825. The simile of the charwoman runs thus:

> Now Morning, yawning, rais'd her from her bed,
> Slipp'd on her wrapper blue and 'kerchief red,
> And took from Night the key of Sleep's abode;
> For Night within that mansion had bestow'd
> The Hours of day; now, turn and turn about,
> Morn takes the key and lets the Day-hours out;
> Laughing, they issue from the ebon gate,
> And Night walks in. As when, in drowsy state,
> Some watchman, wed to one who chars all day,
> Takes to his lodging's door his creeping way;
> His rib, arising, lets him in to sleep,
> While she emerges to scrub, dust, and sweep.

This is the lobster simile in *Hudibras*, Part II, Canto ii, lines 29–32:

> The sun had long since, in the lap
> Of Thetis, taken out his nap,
> And, like a lobster boiled, the morn
> From black to red began to turn.

Hazard is the chief of the gods in *The Chessiad's* little drama.

'You are Timothy.' See Letter 469.

I have included in my edition of Lamb's *Works* a review of Dibdin's book, in the *New Times*, 27th January 1825, which both from internal evidence and from the quotation of the charwoman passage I take to be by Lamb, who was writing for that paper at that time.]

544. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

[P.M. *20th January 1825.*]

The brevity of this is owing to scratching it off at my desk amid expected interruptions. By habit, I can write Letters only at office.

DEAR MISS H.,

Thank you for a noble Goose, which wanted only the massive Encrustation that we used to pick-axe open about this season in old Gloster Place. When shall we eat another Goosepye together? The pheasant too must not be forgotten, twice as big and half as good as a partridge. You ask about the editor of the Lond. I know of none. This first specimen is flat and pert enough to justify subscribers who grudge at t'other shilling. De Quincey's Parody was submitted to him before printed, and had his Probatum. The 'Horns' is in a poor taste, resembling the most laboured papers in the Spectator. I had sign'd it 'Jack Horner:' but Taylor and Hessey said, it would be thought an offensive article, unless I put my known signature to it; and wrung from me my slow consent. But did you read the 'Memoir of Liston'? and did you guess whose it was? Of all the Lies I ever put off, I value this most. It is from top to toe, every paragraph, Pure Invention; and has passed for Gospel, has been republished in newspapers, and in the penny play-bills of the Night, as an authentic Account. I shall certainly go to the Naughty Man some day for my Fibbings. In the next No. I figure as a Theologian! and have attacked my late brethren, the Unitarians. What Jack Pudding tricks I shall play next, I know not. I am almost at the end of my Tether.

Coleridge is quite blooming; but his Book has not budded yet. I hope I have spelt Torquay right now, and that this will find you all mending, and looking forward to a London flight with the

Spring. Winter *we* have had none, but plenty of foul weather. I have lately pick'd up an Epigram which pleased me.

Two noble Earls, whom if I quote,
Some folks might call me Sinner;
The one invented half a coat;
The other half a dinner.

The plan was good, as some will say
And fitted to console one:
Because, in this poor starving day,
Few can afford a whole one.

I have made the Lame one still lamer by imperfect memory, but spite of bald diction, a little done to it might improve it into a good one. You have nothing else to do at [*'Talk kay' here written and scratched out*] Torquay. Suppose you try it. Well God bless you all, as wishes Mary, [most] sincerely, with many thanks for Letter &c. ELIA.

['Gloster Place.' A reference to the hospitable Monkhouses, at No. 34.

The *London Magazine* included in the January issue three essays by Lamb: 'The Letter to an Old Gentleman whose Education has been Neglected,' held over from 1823, 'The Vision of Horns,' and the bogus 'Biographical Memoirs of Mr. Liston.' The theological paper in 'the next number' of the *London Magazine* was 'Unitarian Protests' accompanied by another 'flam,' the 'Autobiography of Mr. Munden.' There is a little mystery in the phrase 'late brethren,' for it must have been long since Lamb attended any conventicle. He had begun by 'adoring' Priestley, but was now quite unattached.

'Coleridge's book.' The *Aids to Reflection*, published in May or June 1825.

'I have lately pick'd up an Epigram.' 'Recalled to memory' would be more exact, I think, for the author was Henry Man, an old South-Sea House clerk, whom in his South-Sea House essay Lamb mentions as a wit. The epigram, which refers to Lord Spencer and Lord Sandwich, was printed in Man's *Miscellaneous Works*, 1802.]

545. TO VINCENT NOVELLO

[P.M. *25th January 1825.*]

DEAR CORELLI,

My sister's cold is as obstinate as an old Handelian whom a modern amateur is trying to convert to Mozart-ism. As company must & always does injure it, Emma and I propose to come to you in the evening of tomorrow, *instead of meeting here.* An early

bread-and-cheese supper at ½ past eight will oblige us. Loves to the Bearer of many Children. C. LAMB.

Tuesday

Colebrooke.

I sign with a black seal, that you may begin to think her cold has killed Mary, which will be an agreeable UNSURPRISE when you read the Note.

[This is the first letter to Novello, who was the peculiar champion of Mozart and Haydn. Lamb calls him Corelli after Archangelo Corelli (1653–1713), the violinist and composer. It was part of a joke between Lamb and Novello that Lamb should affect to know a great deal about music. See the *Elia* essay 'A Chapter on Ears' for a description of Novello's playing. Mrs. Novello was the mother of eleven children.]

546. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

[P.M. Islington.] *January 1825.*

DEAR D.,

My sister's cold continues strong and obstinate. We therefore propose to see you etc. sometime in the latter end of next week, instead of this. But *come you must.*

Believe us, with apologies to your sister,

Yours sincerely,

C. LAMB.

[The following letter is in reply to one from Manning asking if he may repeat a visit (in 1824) to Colebrook Cottage. He writes thus:]

547. TO THOMAS MANNING

[Not dated: *? 26th January 1825.*]

MY DEAR M.,

You might have come inopportunely a week since, when we had an inmate. At present and for as long as *ever* you like, our castle is at your service. I saw Tuthill yesternight, who has done for me what may

> To all my nights and days to come,
> Give solely sovran sway and masterdom.

But I dare not hope, for fear of disappointment. I cannot be more explicit at present. But I have it under his own hand, that

I am *non*-capacitated (I cannot write it *in*-) for business. O joyous imbecility! Not a susurration of this to *anybody!*

Mary's love. C. LAMB.

[Lamb had just taken a most momentous step in his career and had consulted Tuthill as to his health, in the hope of perhaps obtaining release and a pension from the East India House. We learn more of this soon.

The couplet is from *Macbeth*, I. v. 70–1.

Manning seems to have previously had the run of Colebrook Cottage. Here is a letter from him referring to a visit there:

[*Early February 1825.*]

DEAR L.,

I expect to come to town next week or the week after, being my nearest way into Norfolk. I would gladly make a few days stay at that cottage situate in a romantic nook on the banks of the New River & wd wish to know how the L^{d} & L^{y} of the Demesne stand affected thereunto. I spent many pleasant [hours there (?)], tho dayly barked at by Prynne, whose voice, mungrel as it is, I should hear again with pleasure. But perhaps in addition to the cropping of his Ears (whence the learned antiquarian Betsy calls him Prynne [1] instead of Prince) unhidebound Death has already cropped him, & sent his skin to the tanner, or at least adverse ravishing fate brought on his dissolution from your Society.—If you are after purchasing a boat for *your* portion of y^{e} River, hasten the bargain & get it home, for I am very fond of the water, & can fancy a strange pleasure in rowing from your arched Entrance to the Gates with Portcullis at y^{e} bottom of Cambden St.—Is there a P^{t} cullis there? or do I dream? I always think of Colebrook Cottage as a Mysterious Castle, hard of access to find—owing, I suppose, to first impressions; for the Coachman & I drove three times round the walls & fosse before we [found (?)] that Sally Port—to w^{h} Sally Port the person who performed the office of Sally Porter was one Betsy I think. She also not easy of access—guarded with severe indifference, & stern neglect of all that does not concern her offices. The shafts of Badinage dropt from her like Schoolboy Arrows from the Walls of a lonely castle—you could not hear whether they hit her or not, so distant was she—you saw them drop into the Nettles & Rubbish below & were vext to think they were lost. But all this, rough & hard & Puzzling, does but give a zest to the hospitable & gracious reception of the Lady of the Castle within. Tis like the pleasure of cracking a hard *good* Walnut. Says Martin B who is now standing by me, 'Aye & much better, for the within of a Walnut only gives you meat ('High as Hall; Bitter as Gall; Soft as silk; white as Milk; & yet tis man's meat.' Vide Seminarium Infantile) but the Lady within at Colebrook Hall gives you both meat & drink.' And then he laughed with strange obliquity of feature, & I laughed for company; but I thought it a great falling down from the pure

[1] William Prynne (1600–69), Presbyterian lawyer, published *Histriomastix* in 1633 and lost both his ears, besides incurring fine and imprisonment.

sublime I had been floating in. However it gives me a good opportunity of descending to the familiar & begging you to give me a line just saying whether it will be perfectly convenient to you and your good Sister to &c, &c, &c.]

548. TO LEIGH HUNT

[No date: *? Early 1825.*]

ILLUSTREZZIMO SIGNOR,

I have obeyed your mandate to a tittle. I accompany this with a volume. But what have you done with the first I sent you?—have you swapt it with some lazzaroni for macaroni? or pledged it with a gondolierer for a passage? Peradventuri the Cardinal Gonsalvi took a fancy to it:—his Eminence has done my Nearness an honour. 'Tis but a step to the Vatican. As you judge, my works do not enrich the workman, but I get vat I can for 'em. They keep dragging me on, a poor, worn mill-horse, in the eternal round of the damn'd magazine; but 'tis they are blind, not I. Colburn (where I recognise with delight the gay W. Honeycomb renovated) hath the ascendency.

I was with the Novellos last week. They have a large, cheap house and garden, with a dainty library (magnificent) without books. But what will make you bless yourself (I am too old for wonder), something has touched the right organ in Vincentio at last. He attends a Wesleyan chapel on Kingsland Green. He at first tried to laugh it off—he only went for the singing; but the cloven foot—I retract—the Lamb's trotters—are at length apparent. Mary Isabella attributes it to a lightness induced by his headaches. But I think I see in it a less accidental influence. Mister Clark is at perfect staggers! the whole fabric of his infidelity is shaken. He has no one to join him in his coarse insults and indecent obstreperousnesses against Christianity, for Holmes (the bonny Holmes) is gone to Salisbury to be organist, and Isabella and the Clark make but a feeble quorum. The children have all nice, neat little clasped pray-books, and I have laid out 7s. 8d. in Watts's Hymns for Christmas presents for them. The eldest girl alone holds out; she has been at Boulogne, skirting upon the vast focus of Atheism, and imported bad principles in patois French. But the strongholds are crumbling.

N. appears as yet to have but a confused notion of the Atonement. It makes him giddy, he says, to think much about it. But such giddiness is spiritual sobriety.

Well, Byron is gone, and —— is now the best poet in England. Fill up the gap to your fancy. Barry Cornwall has at last carried the pretty A. S. They are just in the treacle-moon. Hope it won't clog his wings—gaum we used to say at school.

Mary, my sister, has worn me out with eight weeks' cold and toothache, her average complement in the winter, and it will not go away. She is otherwise well, and reads novels all day long. She has had an exempt year, a good year, for which, forgetting the minor calamity, she and I are most thankful.

Alsager is in a flourishing house, with wife and children about him, in Mecklenburg Square—almost too fine to visit.

Barron Field is come home from Sydney, but as yet I can hear no tidings of a pension. He is plump and friendly, his wife really a very superior woman. He resumes the bar.

I have got acquainted with Mr. Irving, the Scotch preacher, whose fame must have reached you. He is a humble disciple at the foot of Gamaliel S. T. C. Judge how his own sectarists must stare when I tell you he has dedicated a book to S. T. C., acknowledging to have learnt more of the nature of Faith, Christianity, and Christian Church, from him than from all men he ever conversed with. He is a most amiable, sincere, modest man in a room, this Boanerges in the temple. Mrs. Montague told him the dedication would do him no good. 'That shall be a reason for doing it,' was his answer. Judge now, whether this man be a quack.

Dear H., take this imperfect notelet for a letter; it looks so much the more like conversing on nearer terms. Love to all the Hunts, old friend Thornton, and all.

C. LAMB.

[Leigh Hunt was still living at Genoa. Shelley and Byron, whom he had left England to join, were both dead; Shelley in 1822, and Byron on 19th April 1824. Hunt's '"Family Journal," by Harry Honeycomb' had begun in the *New Monthly Magazine* for January 1825.

Cardinal Gonsalvi was Ercole Consalvi (1757–1824), secretary to Pius VII, and a patron of the arts. Lawrence painted him.

By Mary Isabella, Lamb meant Mary Sabilla Novello, Vincent Novello's wife. The eldest girl was Mary Victoria, afterwards the wife of Charles Cowden

Clarke, the 'Mister Clark' mentioned here. Novello (now at Shacklewell Green) remained a good Roman Catholic to the end. Holmes was Edward Holmes (1797–1859), a pupil of Cowden Clarke's father at Enfield and schoolfellow of Keats. He had lived with the Novellos, studying music, and later became a musical writer and teacher and the biographer of Mozart. Lamb is also remembering Wordsworth's *Yarrow Unvisited*—'the bonny holms of Yarrow.'

'A. S.' Anne Skepper.

'We used to say.' Leigh Hunt was also at Christ's Hospital.

Mrs. Barron Field was a Miss Jane Carncroft, to whom Lamb addressed some album verses (see my edition of Lamb's *Works*). Leigh Hunt knew of Field's return, for he—or so is probable, but the poem is unsigned—had contributed to the *New Monthly* in 1824 a rhymed letter to him in which he welcomed him home again.

Irving was then drawing people to the chapel in Hatton Garden, attached to the Caledonian Asylum. The dedication, to which Lamb alludes more than once in his correspondence, was that of his work, *For Missionaries after the Apostolical School, a series of orations in four parts. . . .* 1825. It runs:

DEDICATION

TO

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE, Esq.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND,

Unknown as you are, in the true character either of your mind or of your heart, to the greater part of your countrymen, and misrepresented as your works have been, by those who have the ear of the vulgar, it will seem wonderful to many that I should make choice of you, from the circle of my friends, to dedicate to you these beginnings of my thoughts upon the most important subject of these or any times. And when I state the reason to be, that you have been more profitable to my faith in orthodox doctrine, to my spiritual understanding of the Word of God, and to my right conception of the Christian Church, than any or all of the men with whom I have entertained friendship and conversation, it will perhaps still more astonish the mind, and stagger the belief, of those who have adopted, as once I did myself, the misrepresentations which are purchased for a hire and vended for a price, concerning your character and works. You have only to shut your ear to what they ignorantly say of you, and earnestly to meditate the deep thoughts with which you are instinct, and give them a suitable body and form that they may live, then silently commit them to the good sense of ages yet to come, in order to be ranked hereafter amongst the most gifted sages and greatest benefactors of your country. Enjoy and occupy the quiet which, after many trials, the providence of God hath bestowed upon you, in the bosom of your friends; and may you be spared until you have made known the multitude of your thoughts, unto those who at present value, or shall hereafter arise to value, their worth.

I have partaken so much high intellectual enjoyment from being admitted

into the close and familiar intercourse with which you have honoured me, and your many conversations concerning the revelations of the Christian faith have been so profitable to me in every sense, as a student and a preacher of the Gospel, as a spiritual man and a Christian pastor, and your high intelligence and great learning have at all times so kindly stooped to my ignorance and inexperience, that not merely with the affection of friend to friend, and the honour due from youth to experienced age, but with the gratitude of a disciple to a wise and generous teacher, of an anxious inquirer to the good man who hath helped him in the way of truth, I do now presume to offer you the first-fruits of my mind since it received a new impulse towards truth, and a new insight into its depths, from listening to your discourse. Accept them in good part, and be assured that however insignificant in themselves, they are the offering of a heart which loves your heart, and of a mind which looks up with reverence to your mind.

EDWARD IRVING.

'Old friend Thornton' was Leigh Hunt's son, Thornton Leigh Hunt, whom Lamb had addressed in verse in 1815 as 'my favourite child.' He was now fourteen.]

549. TO JOHN BATES DIBDIN

[P.M. *8th February 1825.*]

Leadenhall Street.

DEAR SIR,

We expect you of course to-morrow. As to the time, 6 is pleasanter to us than 7, & 7 than 8. But at any hour we shall be most glad to see you and sisters.

Yours &c.,

C. L.

Tuesday.

[Mrs. Anderson's note: 'The late R. W. Dibdin said he remembered his aunt, Mrs. Tonna (one of the sisters of J. B. D.) telling how she went to tea with Charles and Mary Lamb at Colebrook Cottage.']

550. TO BERNARD BARTON

[Dated at end: *10th February 1825.*]

DEAR B. B.,

I am vexed that ugly paper should have offended. I kept it as clear from objectionable phrases as possible, and it was Hessey's fault, and my weakness, that it did not appear anonymous. No more of it for God's sake.

The Spirit of the Age is by Hazlitt. The characters of Coleridge, &c. he had done better in former publications, the praise and the abuse much stronger, &c. but the new ones are capitally done. Horne Tooke is a matchless portrait. My advice is, to borrow it rather than read [? buy] it. I have it. He has laid on too many colours on my likeness, but I have had so much injustice done me in my own name, that I make a rule of accepting as much over-measure to Elia as Gentlemen think proper to bestow. Lay it on and spare not.

Your Gentleman Brother sets my mouth a watering after Liberty. O that I were kicked out of Leadenhall with every mark of indignity, and a competence in my fob. The birds of the air would not be so free as I should. How I would prance and curvet it, and pick up cowslips, and ramble about purposeless as an ideot! The Author-mometer is a good fancy. I have caused great speculation in the dramatic (not *thy*) world by a Lying Life of Liston, all pure invention. The Town has swallowed it, and it is copied into News Papers, Play Bills, etc., as authentic. You do not know the Droll, and possibly missed reading the article (in our 1st No., New Series). A life more improbable for him to have lived would not be easily invented. But your rebuke, coupled with 'Dream on J. Bunyan,' checks me. I'd rather do more in my favorite way, but feel dry. I must laugh sometimes. I am poor Hypochondriacus, and *not* Liston.

Our 2nd N° is all trash. What are T. and H. about? It is whip syllabub, 'thin sown with aught of profit or delight.' Thin sown! not a germ of fruit or corn. Why did poor Scott die! There was comfort in writing with such associates as were his little band of Scribblers, some gone away, some affronted away, and I am left as the solitary widow looking for water cresses.

The only clever hand they have is Darley, who has written on the Dramatists, under name of John Lacy. But his function seems suspended.

I have been harassed more than usually at office, which has stopt my correspondence lately. I write with a confused aching head, and you must accept this apology for a Letter.

I will do something soon if I can as a peace offering to the

Queen of the East Angles. Something she shan't scold about.
For the Present, farewell.

Thine C. L.

10 Feb. 1825

I am fifty years old this day. Drink my health.

['That ugly paper' was 'A Vision of Horns.'

Hazlitt's *Spirit of the Age* had just been published, containing criticisms, among others, of Coleridge, Horne Tooke, and Lamb. Lamb was very highly praised. Here is a passage from the article:

> How admirably he has sketched the former inmates of the South-Sea House; what 'fine fretwork he makes of their double and single entries!' With what a firm yet subtle pencil he has embodied 'Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist!' How notably he embalms a battered *beau*; how delightfully an amour, that was cold forty years ago, revives in his pages! With what well-disguised humour he introduces us to his relations, and how freely he serves up his friends! Certainly, some of his portraits are *fixtures*, and will do to hang up as lasting and lively emblems of human infirmity. Then there is no one who has so sure an ear for 'the chimes at midnight,' not even excepting Mr. Justice Shallow; nor could Master Silence himself take his 'cheese and pippins' with a more significant and satisfactory air. With what a gusto Mr. Lamb describes the Inns and Courts of law, the Temple and Gray's Inn, as if he had been a student there for the last two hundred years, and had been as well acquainted with the person of Sir Francis Bacon as he is with his portrait or writings! It is hard to say whether St. John's Gate is connected with more intense and authentic associations in his mind, as a part of old London Wall, or as the frontispiece (time out of mind) of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He haunts Watling Street like a gentle spirit; the avenues to the play-houses are thick with panting recollections; and Christ's Hospital still breathes the balmy breath of infancy in his description of it!

'Your Gentleman Brother.' John Barton, Bernard's younger half-brother.

'The Author-mometer.' I have not discovered to what Lamb refers.

'Dream on J. Bunyan.' Probably a poem by Barton, but I have not traced it.

Hypochondriacus is one of the figures pictured in the frontispiece to Burton's *Anatomy*.

'T. and H.' Taylor & Hessey.

'Poor Scott.' John Scott, who founded the *London Magazine*.

'The solitary widow.' In Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*.

'The Queen of the East Angles.' Possibly Lucy Barton, possibly Anne Knight, a friend of Barton's.]

551. TO J. A. HESSEY

[P.M. *17th February 1825.*]

DEAR HESSEY,

I can promise no more for the *next* London. This must not have *Elia's* name. You may append [a] note to the Title, to say it was *communicated* by him, if you think the name anything.

Yours ever—

C LAMB

You see I am driven to shifts, when I take suggested subjects. Defoe has a Hymn to the Pillory, but I have never seen it. This, to obviate charges of plagiarism which will be made.

I long for S. T. C.'s book.

With the proof, will you send me the 1st no. of new Series. The 2nd falls off! Prosperity to the Next.

[The reference is to the paper 'Reflections in the Pillory' in the *London Magazine* for March 1825.]

552. TO B. W. PROCTER

[No date: *? 1st March 1825.*]

DEAR P.,

We shall be most glad to see you, though more glad to have seen double *you*, but we will expect finer walking-weather. Bring my *Congreve*, second vol., in your hand. I have 2 books of yours lock'd up, but how shall I tell it—*horresco referens*—that I miss, and can't possibly account for it, *Hollis on Johnson's Milton*! I will march the town thro', but I will repair the loss. You will be sorry to hear that poor Monkhouse died on Saturday at Clifton.

C. L.

553. TO SARAH HUTCHINSON

[Dated at end: *1st March 1825.*]

DEAR MISS HUTCHINSON,

Your news has made us all very sad. I had my hopes to the last. I seem as if I were disturbing you at such an awful time even by a reply. But I must acknowledge your kindness in presuming upon the interest we shall all feel on the subject. No one will more feel it than Robinson, to whom I have written.

No one more than he and we acknowledged the nobleness and worth of what we have lost. Words are perfectly idle. We can only pray for resignation to the Survivors. Our dearest expressions of condolence to Mrs. M—— at this time in particular. God bless you both. I have nothing of ourselves to tell you, and if I had, I could not be so unreverent as to trouble you with it. We are all well, that is all. Farewell, the departed—and the left. Your's and his, while memory survives, cordially

C. LAMB.

1 Mar. 1825.

[The letter refers to the death of Thomas Monkhouse, 26th February 1825.]

554. TO T. HILL

[Dated at end: *3rd March 1825.*]

DEAR SIR,

The Warehouse rents on Sago are reduced one half. Your old Sago is still warehoused. It is thought a petition might procure a remission of the old Rates.

ELIA.

3 Mar 1825

[I assume T. Hill to be Tommy Hill, the drysalter, the friend of Theodore Hook, whom Lamb is supposed to have used as a model in his 'Lepus' paper, 'Tom Pry.' See vol. iii, page 51.]

555. TO BERNARD BARTON

[P.M. *23rd March 1825.*]

Wednesday.

DEAR B. B.,

I have had no impulse to write, or attend to any single object but myself, for weeks past. My single self. I by myself I. I am sick of hope deferred. The grand wheel is in agitation that is to turn up my Fortune, but round it rolls and will turn up nothing. I have a glimpse of Freedom, of becoming a Gentleman at large, but I am put off from day to day. I have offered my resignation, and it is neither accepted nor rejected. Eight weeks am I kept in this fearful suspence. Guess what an absorbing stake I feel it. I am not conscious of the existence of friends present or absent. The E. I. Directors alone can be that thing to me—or not.—

I have just learn'd that nothing will be decided this week. Why the next? Why any week? It has fretted me into an itch of the fingers, I rub 'em against Paper and write to you, rather than not allay this Scorbuta.

While I can write, let me adjure you to have no doubts of Irving. Let Mr. Mitford drop his disrespect. Irving has prefixed a dedication (of a Missionary Subject 1st part) to Coleridge, the most beautiful cordial and sincere. He there acknowledges his obligation to S. T. C. for his knowledge of Gospel truths, the nature of a Xtian Church, etc., to the talk of S. T. C. (at whose Gamaliel feet he sits weekly) [more] than to that of all the men living. This from him—The great dandled and petted Sectarian—to a religious character so equivocal in the world's Eye as that of S. T. C., so foreign to the Kirk's estimate! —Can this man be a Quack? The language is as affecting as the Spirit of the Dedication. Some friend told him, 'This dedication will do you no Good,' *i.e.* not in the world's repute, or with your own people. 'That is a reason for doing it,' quoth Irving.

I am thoroughly pleased with him. He is firm, outspeaking, intrepid—and docile as a pupil of Pythagoras.

You must like him.

Yours, in tremors of painful hope, C. LAMB.

[In the first paragraphs Lamb refers to the great question of his release from the India House.

In a letter dated 19th February 1825 of Mary Russell Mitford, who looked upon Irving as quack absolute, we find her discussing the preacher with Charles Lamb.]

556. TO J. A. HESSEY

DEAR H., [P.M. *28th March 1825.*]

I have vanity enough to think the slight additament I send to the 'Last Peach' worth 2d. Can you hook it in immediately before the Last sentence 'You have my honest confession &c.?'

I have forgot the context.

ELIA.

['The Last Peach' was in the *London Magazine* for April 1825. It was probably suggested by Lamb's letter to Barton of 1st December 1824.]

557. TO HENRY CRABB ROBINSON

[*29th March*] *1825.*

I have left the d——d India House for Ever!
Give me great joy. C. LAMB.

[Robinson states in his Reminiscences of Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Lamb, preserved in MS. at Dr. Williams's Library: 'A most important incident in Lamb's life, tho' in the end not so happy for him as he anticipated, was his obtaining his discharge, with a pension of almost £400 a year, from the India House. This he announced to me by a note put into my letter box: "I have left the India House. D—— Time. I'm all for eternity." He was rather more than fifty years of age. I found him and his Sister in high spirits when I called to wish them joy on the 22nd of April. "I never saw him so calmly cheerful," says my journal, "as he seemed then."' See the next letters for Lamb's own account of the event.

At a Court of Directors of the India House held on 29th March 1825 it was resolved 'that the resignation of Mr. Charles Lamb of the Accountant-General's Office, on account of certified ill-health, be accepted, and, it appearing that he has served the Company faithfully for 33 years, and is now in the receipt of an income of £730 per annum, he be allowed a pension of £450 (four hundred and fifty pounds) per annum, under the provisions of the act of the 53 Geo. III, cap. 155, to commence from this day.']

558. TO J. A. HESSEY

DEAR HESSEY, [P.M. *30th March 1825.*]

I am free.—

I am not so rich in future, as I have been. I mean to make the *London Magazine* smart for it.

It would hearten me up, if you would settle with me always at Midsummer and Xmas.

But this is only a hint—I have enough to live comfortably.

Send the Mag in future to Colebrook Cottage, Colebrooke Row, Islington. And the forthcoming one for the 1st April,—oblige me by sending a copy with 'Mr. Lamb's respects' on the cover to Miss Kelly, 8 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

Yours truly,

C. LAMB.

[The address is to Messrs. Taylor & Hessey, Booksellers, Fleet Street, with *Mr. H.* underlined in the corner.

The April number contained the essay called 'Barbara S——,' which related to an incident in the early life of Fanny Kelly.]

559. TO J. A. HESSEY

April 1st, 1825.

DEAR H.,

Landseer is a troublesome chap. He is hurt at your *Editor* returning his paper for alterations. He says it has a beginning, middle & end, & is all he wishes to say. He has put the enclosed in *my* hands. Why, I know not, unless he suspects me of being that character. Pray answer him, & rid me of the subject.

[*Here is a characteristic ink smudge.*]

You misunderstood me if you thought I wanted cash. I have a full supply, & shall not call on you till Midsummer.

Yours truly

I am too unsettled (in the first novelty of my emancipation) to get to work yet. But in a week or two I hope you'll hear from

ELIA.

[Landseer was probably Thomas Landseer, the engraver and a friend of Haydon's, who, I believe, was at Haydon's famous party with the Comptroller of Stamps.]

560. TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Colebrook Cottage,
6 April, 1825.

DEAR WORDSWORTH,

I have been several times meditating a letter to you concerning the good thing which has befallen me, but the thought of poor Monkhouse came across me. He was one that I had exulted in the prospect of congratulating me. He and you were to have been the first participators, for indeed it has been ten weeks since the first motion of it.

Here I am then after 33 years slavery, sitting in my own room at 11 o'Clock this finest of all April mornings a freed man, with £441 a year for the remainder of my life, live I as long as John Dennis, who outlived his annuity and starved at 90. £441, i.e. £450, with a deduction of £9 for a provision secured to my sister, she being survivor, the Pension guaranteed by Act Georgii Tertii, &c.

I came home for ever on Tuesday in last week. The incom-

prehensibleness of my condition overwhelm'd me. It was like passing from life into Eternity. Every year to be as long as three, i.e. to have three times as much real time, time that is my own, in it! I wandered about thinking I was happy, but feeling I was not. But that tumultuousness is passing off, and I begin to understand the nature of the gift. Holydays, even the annual month, were always uneasy joys: their conscious fugitiveness—the craving after making the most of them. Now, when all is holyday, there are no holydays. I can sit at home in rain or shine without a restless impulse for walkings. I am daily steadying, and shall soon find it as natural to me to be my own master, as it has been irksome to have had a master. Mary wakes every morning with an obscure feeling that some good has happened to us.

Leigh Hunt and Montgomery after their releasements describe the shock of their emancipation much as I feel mine. But it hurt their frames. I eat, drink, and sleep sound as ever. I lay no anxious schemes for going hither and thither, but take things as they occur. Yesterday I excursioned 20 miles, to day I write a few letters. Pleasuring was for fugitive play days, mine are fugitive only in the sense that life is fugitive. Freedom and life co-existent.

At the foot of such a call upon you for gratulation, I am ashamd to advert to that melancholy event. Monkhouse was a character I learnd to love slowly, but it grew upon me, yearly, monthly, daily. What a chasm has it made in our pleasant parties! His noble friendly face was always coming before me, till this hurrying event in my life came, and for the time has absorpt all interests. In fact it has shaken me a little. My old desk companions with whom I have had such merry hours seem to reproach me for removing my lot from among them. They were pleasant creatures, but to the anxieties of business, and a weight of possible worse ever impending, I was not equal. Tuthill and Gilman gave me my certificates. I laughed at the friendly lie implied in them, but my sister shook her head and said it was all true. Indeed this last winter I was jaded out, winters were always worse than other parts of the year, because the spirits are worse, and I had no daylight. In summer I had daylight evenings. The relief was hinted to me from a superior power, when I poor

slave had not a hope but that I must wait another 7 years with Jacob—and lo! the Rachel which I coveted is brot. to me—

Have you read the noble dedication of Irving's 'Missionary Orations' to S. T. C. Who shall call this man a Quack hereafter? What the Kirk will think of it neither I nor Irving care. When somebody suggested to him that it would not be likely to do him good, videlicet among his own people, 'That is a reason for doing it' was his noble answer.

That Irving thinks he has profited mainly by S. T. C., I have no doubt. The very style of the Ded. shows it.

Communicate my news to Southey, and beg his pardon for my being so long acknowledging his kind present of the 'Church,' which circumstances I do not wish to explain, but having no reference to himself, prevented at the time. Assure him of my deep respect and friendliest feelings.

Divide the same, or rather each take the whole to you, I mean you and all yours. To Miss Hutchinson I must write separate. What's her address? I want to know about Mrs. M.

Farewell! and end at last, long selfish Letter!

C. LAMB.

[Lamb expanded the first portion of this letter into the *Elia* essay 'The Superannuated Man,' which ought to be read in connection with it.

Leigh Hunt and James Montgomery, the poet, had both undergone imprisonment for libel.]

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